



NEW IDEAS FOR AUSTRALIA'S CITIES

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2007

The editors would like
to thank the following
for their invaluable
support for Urban 45:

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Kate Moloney and
Rike Muir, all at RMIT.

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INTRODUCTION

The Urban 45: An introduction to 45 new ideas for Australia's cities

Welcome to the Urban 45, forty-five challenging ideas across fifteen areas for action in Australia's cities. The Urban 45, its summit and this document were organised by a coordinating committee of academics (from RMIT and UTAS) with the express aim of achieving a higher profile to debates on urban affairs in Australia. In the run-up to a federal election, and in looking to the future, it is timely to ask what plans and ambitions we have for our population centres and hubs of economic activity. A central focus of Urban 45 is an absence in state-federal policies over the past decade. A time of significant economic growth has perhaps also generated the impression that our urban problems were either a matter for the cities themselves or perhaps not a problem at all. **Yet it is increasingly clear that problems of uneven growth and the fallout from growth itself have not generally been tackled head-on in a coordinated approach.**

The Urban 45 presents the opportunity for innovation in ideas and policy thinking that is non-political and oriented to the identification of problems and effective solutions that lie outside any particular ideological framework. Our aim has been to harness the research experience, thoughts and skills of many Australian academics and to set them the challenge of writing brief statements followed by a short series of policy proposals – areas in which governments could act immediately and see a strong return for such redirection. This has been a challenge but also an opportunity for academics to highlight their relevance in what has often become a stale and sometimes bitter series of debates about constitutional powers and state-federal relations.

For the many people in our cities who see pollution, congestion, expensive housing, a struggle for suitable educational and health opportunities and the growth of disparities in wealth and opportunity there has not yet been either an effective or serious engagement with these issues or the recognition that these are primarily urban and spatial in their constitution. **To this end we**

need to see innovation and clarity in approaches seeking to disentangle the root causes of these complex problems and the kind of mechanisms and incentives that can be used to address these problems. For the States our cities are recognised as the key generators of wealth and economic growth and also as dominant population centres yet, ironically, consistent and innovative policies addressing problems of disadvantage and growth have been lacking.

We need to recognise that Australia's complex system of urban governance defies simple policy prescriptions. In addition to the three layers of local, State and Federal Government the state capitals are subject to varying political geographies (Brisbane is a single local city authority area, Melbourne and Sydney a mosaic of their city authorities plus adjoining local government areas). The Coalition Government has tended to see urban affairs as the hallmark of previous Labor government administrations and has played shy of a coordinating or interested party. The result of this inaction has been the generation of both complex and multi-scaled problems and the list is long – urban water supply and the challenges of climate change, pollution and congestion, affordable housing, concerns about crime, multiculturalism and social cohesiveness to name only a few.

Tackling such problems through a system of multiple tiers and geographies of government makes any clear identification of who might take charge and plan responses to these issues a fraught one.

Mechanisms to form bodies in charge of key issues nationally or at the local level, or new partnerships from existing organisations, needs to be a focal point for future policy work. **In the run-up to the federal election and beyond, it is clear that these issues continue to be plagued by ad hoc responses in which a coordinated and effective response requires new thinking about social and economic management in Australia that seeks social fairness and opportunity as its driving values.**

The Urban 45 consists of fifteen field-leading academics who have written on a thematic area of city life to which





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three high-impact policy initiatives are being attached (hence the 45 of the title). The aim of our summit and this document is to bring the academy and its analysts into closer contact with policy makers, journalists and practitioners in the third (social) sector and industry. **Our key objective is generating consensus and a cumulative weight to evidence-based ideas designed to jump-start policy intervention into these areas of our daily lives and livelihoods.**

In countries like the UK urban issues have received ministerial championing. Britain's blueprint for an 'urban renaissance' was connected to a major academic urban research programme and dedicated support from the civil service to Government departments that were brought together under a programme of 'joined-up thinking'. In Australia, with around 80 per cent of its population living in these urban centres of social and economic vitality, one could be mistaken for wondering why so little action has been forthcoming. Contemporary debates on housing affordability are only the start of where an urban agenda with broad membership might begin. It is through initiatives like Urban 45 that academics are highlighting their relevance to growing public disquiet at the problems that our urbanised populations face while standing as a broader model for engagement between partners in this complex area of public management.

What kind of cities do we want to live in? How can we prosper in relation to the full range of our potential and well-being, as well as ensuring that prosperity benefits all? A major advantage to starting to think clearly and effectively about policy interventions into our urban lives is that major hits in one domain will offer significant benefits in other areas of concern. To take one good example of this we already know that addressing issues of urban sprawl will offer gains in labour market outcomes, public realm vitality, health, to say nothing of connecting with major concerns about climate

change, pollution and fuel sustainability. These kinds of interconnections offer huge benefits to whole-of-government approaches to such problems. All of this leads us to suggest that there are, in fact, three further key issues that can be seen as coming out of the Urban 45 process:

1. Leadership on city issues across Australia

The Commonwealth Government presence in addressing issues of urban management and sustainability has been negligible. Members of the Urban 45 are looking for real leadership and innovation at the Commonwealth Government level to help shape and coordinate the issues addressed here. We believe that this commitment should be reflected in a presence and focus at Cabinet level.

2. Cooperation, consensus and effective action by governments

There should be cooperation between the three tiers of government – local, State and Federal – with an emphasis on working together and effectively to achieve real results. In this way the three tiers of government can work together to tackle issues like housing affordability more effectively. Current conflicts between the State/Territory and Commonwealth Governments hinder innovation and planning in ways that damage economic and social opportunities for the residents of urban areas.



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3. Renewal and investment of our infrastructure, in the broadest sense

Australia's urban infrastructure has become run-down. From public transport to the supply of rental housing, renewal and investment are required. Fringe land in cities is part of the answer but regional centres and 'brownfield' sites, as well as initiatives in public transport, jobs, universities and other areas are all part of the answer. If we don't begin to look after and plan initiatives in these areas we are likely to become poorer, both economically and socially. Action on these basic issues should be considered the minimum needed to help facilitate the ability of Australia's cities to be the best places that they can be and for both the people that reside in them as well as those who rely on the opportunities generated by them in the regions. The Urban 45 is only the start to a much-needed national debate about how we move forward on these issues and bring all onboard with us.

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FOREWORD BY MICHAEL LENNON CEO, DISABILITY HOUSING TRUST

The challenges facing Australia's cities are significant and are held in common with our neighbours and similar countries throughout the world.

The pace of change is everywhere and cannot be overlooked. The global economy has doubled in the past decade, and global investment tripled. The economy of China has doubled in the past six years and India in the past ten. Cities everywhere, including Australia, are facing unprecedented demands in planning and managing in this new environment, reflected in daily discussions on housing costs and affordability, climate change, energy and transportation, patterns of new urban development and in-fill developments as well as affluence and deprivation in our neighbourhoods.

These are not abstractions, but critical contemporary issues which are expressed in places where people live and work, where economic activity takes place and where resources are consumed. It has become absurdly unfashionable to think of these as national issues – matters confronting the nation which demand national attention, yet in Australia for many years:

- There has been no Commonwealth Minister or agency or process across the federal system to deal with questions of housing, land, infrastructure and Australia's urban settlements.
- At the state level, most urban planning agencies are regulatory-driven and of limited wider influence.
- State housing agencies are welfare-focused, in arguably terminal financial decline and address little more than five per cent of the nation's housing issues (albeit an important focus).
- Environmental agencies are policy/regulatory in orientation and struggle within internal government systems.

State development agencies vary but tend to be focused on economic programmes and not easily connected to the kind of national goals that the Urban 45 is attempting to promote. It is important to recognise that other national jurisdictions see matters relating

to urban communities as central national concerns. In the United States, the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development has been a driver of national housing, land and related financial programmes for decades. In the UK, the new Prime Minister himself released a recent 'Green Paper' on housing, with the Treasury (and the Chancellor of the Exchequer) having its own specialist Housing and Urban Team. Who would dispute that overarching national aims such as continuous improvements in economic efficiency, sustainable use of natural resources and the equitable distribution of opportunities and support are not core questions for Australia's vast urban areas, both in its towns and cities? Some key issues raise themselves in relation to these questions:

In attracting and stimulating investment, the outcome sought is the creation of good places to live. We also know that new economies depend upon human capital and the ideas which follow. The debates over broadband infrastructure, for example, relate directly to how we equip our urban communities for the modern and borderless world. We know, for example, that clustering of industries aids growth and innovation.

In managing natural resources, cities are the key to consumption and to conservation. How are patterns of land use linked to current and prospective water consumption? Climate change ambitions will rest heavily on energy consumption and transportation systems.

How are pricing shifts, new investment, and changes to the land use/transport interface to impact upon the daily patterns and behaviour of citizens? How we will respond to the almost certain substantial increases in fuel costs?

A housing affordability crisis is evident in the private rental market, home ownership is declining and being delayed significantly for younger people, and social housing is in need of a new direction and leadership. These are key aspects of Australia's fairness and egalitarianism.



FOREWORD BY MICHAEL LENNON CEO, DISABILITY HOUSING TRUST



Australia's federal system deals poorly with these and related urban questions. Responsibilities are divided (as they are in other fields). It is unreasonable to expect a local council to resolve Australia's housing policy, just as it is unnecessary for the Federal Government to design streetscapes. However, there are major urban questions and issues which form part of a suite of national responsibilities and which require management and negotiation through Australia's overly rigid federal system of government. There is a demonstrable need for institutional reform and innovation – as the ongoing debates over water management demonstrate. Cooperative federalism needs also to be organic, responding to varying national conditions and demands.

The 'bush' branding of Australia belies the highly urbanised nature of Australia – the only continent on earth managed within a single nation, thereby allowing issues to be managed in an integrated way. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the ideal vehicle

for advancing and implementing a targeted programme of urban reform in Australia. The staged implementation of Competition Policy and the Goods and Services Tax provide illustrations of the scale of change that can be designed and delivered through this mechanism. Some early priorities for a targeted national urban policy programme might include redressing major imbalances in economic performance and employment; the setting of urban strategies to address climate change targets, and; the expansion of affordable housing and the new design of social housing. Australia has a federal agency for agriculture, fisheries and forests but none focused upon where its people mostly live and work. This curiosity of Australian government structures suggests the need for urgent action, the contributions you will find in The Urban 45 at least begin to address these substantial challenges.

1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING: THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN NIGHTMARE?

The problem

Many Australian households, especially private renters and home purchasers, have experienced a dramatic decline in housing affordability in recent decades. As a result, growing numbers of Australian households are paying an unreasonably high amount of their income in housing costs; there are falling home ownership rates among under thirty-fives; young households aspiring to become first home purchasers are having to wait longer to make their first purchase; mortgage default rates are rising; there are historically high levels of homelessness which are in part due to declining affordability; and an increasing proportion of lower income private renters are experiencing housing stress. Low to moderate income families are turning to the urban fringe in increasing numbers, but these outer suburbs are less well served and many people are forced to commute over long distances to jobs and to access services. Our housing markets are helping to create increasingly segregated urban communities with growing distinctions between low, moderate and high income households. This outcome is a self-reinforcing one and intensifies intergenerational inequities while also creating bottlenecks and inefficiencies in the operation of urban labour markets.

Analysis

Australia's larger cities and many coastal regions are experiencing growing demand as a result of several key factors. Ensuring that the supply of housing (in the right tenures) matches this demand has proved problematic over the last decade. The analysis below identifies the main factors contributing to the decline in housing affordability.

Housing demand: is affected by changes in household composition; labour market changes; growing income inequality; tax policy; and changes in the housing finance system.

There has been a long-term decline in household size. In 1954 there were 3.6 people per household and 2.6 people per household in 2006. Much of this can be attributed to the increase in the proportion of one-person households (from 14% of all households in 1971 to 24% in 2006). Reasons for growth in single-person households are increases in divorce, adults not partnering, and single widowed people. This increase is significant because they are households with only one income available to meet housing costs. From the mid-1970s, access to home ownership is increasingly limited to higher income households, many of which have relied on two incomes.

Australia has a highly uneven spatial distribution of population characterised by concentration in metropolitan capital cities and certain coastal and retirement regions. Continuing population growth has increased housing demand in those cities and regions. This population growth and highly uneven spatial distribution of population is reinforced by international immigration, particularly to Sydney and Melbourne.

Labour market change has resulted in increases in casual, part-time and insecure employment, much of which is low-skilled and low-paid. Some workers prefer casual or part-time work. However, for others it can mean under-employment (i.e., not working as much as they would like) and unstable incomes that limit their capacity to enter into long-term lease or mortgage arrangements. Those who do enter such arrangements are exposed to uncomfortably high levels of risk with damaging long-term consequences. For private renters, default on rent payments can increase difficulties in gaining access to the rental market in the



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future as landlords increasingly use electronic databases to screen out 'high risk' tenants. For home purchasers, default on mortgage payments can result in loss of their dwelling. Labour market restructuring also has a spatial dimension due to the concentration of high paid 'new economy' jobs. It contributes to land price pressures that reduce the supply of low and moderate income housing, especially in inner city areas. This can drive out lower paid service sector workers vital to the efficient working of the metropolitan economy.

Increased income inequality is closely connected to changes in the labour market. Wage distribution has become more unequal.

In 1982, for example, the top 10% highest earners among male full-time employees had average weekly earnings 3.9 times higher than the lowest 10%. In 2002 the ratio was 4.7 times. Low wage workers are finding it increasingly difficult to compete for housing in the private rental and home ownership markets. This means that low income earners are increasingly disadvantaged relative to moderate and high income earners in the race to save for a deposit, while paying rent, and then repaying a mortgage on entry into homeownership. Single low-income households experience the greatest relative disadvantage.

All owner-occupiers benefit from the absence of a tax on capital gains. However, it is households with the biggest houses in the best locations that benefit most. This is associated with an emerging culture of consumption surrounding housing assets as large real capital gains swell the wealth portfolios of home owners, and encourage the release of housing equity to finance consumption, retirement plans or meet unanticipated outlays.

There has been a revolution in the Australian finance system since the mid-1980s. Mortgage finance is now more readily available and lending standards considerably more flexible than in the past. In the last decade, interest rates have fallen dramatically and have remained low. These changes have resulted in:

- Owner occupiers leveraging existing equity and borrowing more to upgrade existing dwellings or unlock housing wealth.
- Investors in rental housing increasing their share of total housing investment (but not the supply of rental housing affordable for lower income households).

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Housing supply: is affected by the supply and cost of land, the construction cost of dwellings; housing investors; and social housing supply.

The rising cost of land is the main factor contributing to increased housing production costs. This is affected by the rate and amount of land released for new housing development. The time taken to bring new housing land onto the market has increased due to planning processes that increase standards and protect the environment. A second factor is the change in infrastructure financing, which has shifted from long-term public utility debt to up-front developer charges. The extent to which developer charges are passed forward to the home purchaser or back to the original owner of the land depends on land supply elasticities. Finally, attempts to limit the outward expansion of larger capital cities have increased the scarcity value of land (the impact of which can be ameliorated by increasing dwelling density).

Construction costs have had much less impact than land costs on total production costs but skills shortages in the building trades and increased construction of multi-unit dwellings (particularly on in-fill sites) add to construction cost pressures.

Currently, the supply of dwellings for rent depends on the behaviour of individual investors. Landlords can take advantage of the tax allowance status of interest payments on debt to leverage acquisition of housing investments where part of the return (capital gains) is leniently taxed. Investor activity can displace first home buyers and has resulted in a pattern of investment that has reduced the supply of rental housing affordable to those on low to moderate incomes. These taxation arrangements have been designed without consideration of their impact on housing affordability. State Government land taxes also play a role.

As land values have spiralled, increasing numbers of landlords can be caught in the land tax base with potential adverse effects on rental housing affordability.

Social housing, provided as public housing by state housing authorities and community housing by not-for-profit organisations, provides the greatest security of tenure and affordability for low-income households.

However, less than 5% of households are social housing tenants and this proportion is declining as a result of reduced government funding since the mid-1990s. In recent decades social housing has become targeted on very low income and otherwise disadvantaged households, which has rendered remaining stock financially non-viable.

Three policy ideas

1. A commitment is required from the Commonwealth and State Governments to act in partnership to significantly expand the supply of affordable rental housing for low and moderate income households. This approach could be formalised through the development of a national Affordable Housing Strategy via the Council of Australian Government processes and facilitated by appointment of a Commonwealth Minister for Housing and Urban Development. The minister could be responsible for establishing and directing an agency that works with State Governments and is responsible for increasing the supply of affordable housing in high cost regions.
2. Existing housing assistance to individual households should be better utilised and targeted to low and moderate income households. Examples are introduction of regional house price and income limits on first home buyer assistance; provision of some form of income protection insurance for marginal buyers in the early years of purchase; and making rent assistance more flexible so that it could be used to stimulate greater investment in affordable housing for low and moderate income households or to encourage labour mobility to areas of labour shortage.
3. Commonwealth and State Governments should strategically use investment in economic and social infrastructure coupled with land use planning controls to change the distribution and nature of urban development. They should direct growth to affordable, well-planned and serviced regional centres and metropolitan district centres.

1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING: THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN NIGHTMARE?

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2. GLOBALISATION AND THE URBAN ECONOMY

The problem

Globalisation in economic terms is a description of the way that the production of goods and services and the networks between firms spread across the globe. This way of doing business, and organising social and cultural connections, has a strong impact upon cities. That impact emerges as the infrastructure for globalisation (e.g., sea and air terminals, nodes in telecommunications networks) is focused in cities. In addition, globally focused production relies upon locally organised networks of people, so that city locations are advantageous. Paradoxically, some of the services whose production or consumption spans the globe seem to locate within walking distance of one another in just a few cities. The cluster of financial services in London is one of many examples of this outcome. Other global production can be found in small sub-regions in just a few large cities.

Analysis

Global production has an impact on an urban economy in the first instance because it draws on an array of services to ensure its operation, so widening and deepening the scale of service sector development in a city. Second, it exposes the operations of firms within a city to a wider source of ideas and potentially to wider markets. These two dimensions can intersect and stimulate innovation and structural economic change at a faster rate than cities with fewer global links. Taken together then, the more globalised the functions of a city, the greater the intensity and rate of change of its economy, and (most likely) the higher the levels of income earned by sections of its resident population, the greater the number of its short-term residents, and the higher the cost of its housing.



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These characteristics of urban economies are usually expressed in the economic and social structures of cities with a substantial presence in the global economy like London and New York. These local outcomes are tied to the high value placed on face-to-face negotiations in the production methods of advanced or producer services and are anchored by some significant institutions. However, it is a limited view. Global activity extends well beyond a core of selected commercial services. To go back to basics, in economic terms the global economy is about trade in goods and services. Closer study of the patterns of trade shows a steady rise in the part that a variety of services play in imports and exports, while the movement of components for final assembly of knowledge-intensive products in sectors like electronics, telecommunication equipment and auto production is a very significant part of all trade. Australia's emphasis on trade in resources is out of step with that trend. However, we have the skill base to engage in the design and supply of knowledge-intensive products. One part of an improved participation in global trade could be based on the skill in resource management.

We could also become more engaged in the trade in equipment with the new energy sources linked to greenhouse gas reduction. We are also able to export services in medical research, pharmaceuticals and equipment, along with smaller areas of activity like urban planning and environmental management, while our success in exporting education has been substantial. Recognising the opportunities in knowledge-intensive goods and services requires a special stance in terms of industry policy.

Three policy ideas

1. National industrial and trade policy be re-focused to provide more support for the export of knowledge-intensive based goods and services.

The new structure of global trade has a further special dimension: it is largely associated with cities. Just as financial services cluster in the city of London, so in other cities and other regions firms selling high-technology equipment of all kinds often see advantages in locating in particular cities and sometimes parts of those cities. The publicity associated with the resources base to Australia's trade masks this effect. Cities like Seattle, Seoul, Osaka, Kobe, Taipei, Helsinki, Milan, Seattle, Munich and Stuttgart are the home of some firms that lead the world in global trade in knowledge-intensive goods and services. The world's most important shipping company is headquartered in Copenhagen, while the biggest air freight operator is based in Memphis; Hong Kong and Singapore (with some adjoining cities) dominate the movement of container shipping while Melbourne is highly ranked as a supplier of tertiary education services to a global market.

That urban concentration is underscored by the concentration of the physical infrastructure needed to move the goods and the people delivering the services. Just 20 cities handle two-thirds of the sea and air freight and almost 50 per cent of the air passengers counted in the top 100 cities, while a study of service exports found most trade took place between cities and countries that are already large service producers. Hence the complex, multi-directional character of modern global trade is in effect 'urban trade'; the capacity of a nation to participate in this trade depends on some special capacities of its cities.

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Apart from being large enough to have a diverse array of firms and skills, for a city to participate in knowledge-intensive trade it needs physical infrastructure to allow easy contact with the global network, and so the capacity and efficiency of seaports, airports, road, rail and telecommunications systems, along with basic scientific and educational infrastructure is an important consideration. But the final export of a knowledge-intensive good or service usually requires a supply chain of sub-contractors; firms in a city can provide them, or manage their operation in other places. A capacity to provide these links locally is an expression of the depth of the city economy, and plays a large part in the global success achieved by the cities cited above in the trade of complex goods and services. In many cases the services will not be available locally; here the local skill is in the management of the network of suppliers, or the

connection of a local supplier to a global network. Hence the skill level and innovative capacity of local firms, or the locally based subsidiaries of multi-national firms, provide the wherewithal to look out to the global market. Success in the trade in knowledge-intensive goods and services for a city depends on policy and action that enhances particular characteristics of its economy and society.

2. That urban capacity for the export of goods and services be a strong part of national policy perspectives on infrastructure.

This broader conception of the working of the global economy has a further consequence. The common view of a global city is associated with finance and banking activity circumscribed by the inner city skyline. Although obviously very important, it is likely some firms involved in the export of knowledge-intensive goods and services



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will be located outside this inner core. Recent thinking has identified a global city region as a framework for these more diverse links between a city and the global economy.

This unit has a special relevance for larger US and European cities, as well as rapidly developing Asian cities. It brings into policy consideration the airport, major suburban university campuses in some cities, research and development areas that may spill over into suburban commercial zones, small and large firms with global markets that can be found in a wide array of inner, middle and outer areas, along with the logistics facilities associated with inter-modal operations for regional assembly and delivery of freight. It also acknowledges the importance of housing and community services for households.

Hence broad-scale metropolitan strategic planning, recognising the significance of locally specific employment nodes, as well as region-wide infrastructure arrangements, has a powerful role to play in creating and enhancing the conditions that allow firms within a city to become more involved in the global economy.

3. That a national approach enable assistance with the delivery of infrastructure services to firms and populations in large-scale metropolitan regions.

In summary, links with the global economy have been central to the vitality of cities since trading first emerged in pre-historic times and remains relevant today. Today those links involve a wide array of activities and draw in a strong supporting cast of sub-contractors and suppliers in cities that participate in trade. Sectoral and spatially targeted policy is needed to nurture and strengthen this role, and to improve the connections of cities to the global network. Those actions will need national funding and coordination.

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3. SUSTAINABLE URBAN LAND MANAGEMENT

The problem

Recently there has been a lot of discussion on land supply for residential development in metropolitan areas. It has been argued by some and dismissed by others, that restricted land supply at the fringe of metropolitan capital cities is the cause of increasing land prices which is in turn reflected in escalating house prices. The connection between land supply, housing and planning is insufficiently understood and requires a better level of co-ordination in policy terms.

Analysis

Demand for land on the urban fringe of metropolitan areas is not a new phenomenon and can be driven by a range of factors. These include interest rates, taxation incentives, subsidies such as first home owners grants, the cost and pace of infrastructure delivery, the assembly of land parcels suitable for development and the inevitable speculative market punting on a continued expansion of the metropolis as populations grow and household size shrinks. In other words, there are a range of factors that can affect land values and housing prices and a policy response targeting just one lacks an understanding of the complexities of the urban fringe land market. For example, the availability and use of land in inner suburbs might be a more significant influence on urban land prices.

Policy responses to the question of land supply in Australian cities have been varied and largely developed at the state level. A significant innovation was the establishment of public sector urban land authorities in the 1970s. Today agencies, such as Landcom in NSW and VicUrban in Victoria, both monitor and directly engage in the process of land development and supply. Wider public interest objectives such as affordable housing have been recently included in their charters. The ACT is an exception as a leasehold jurisdiction and has its own model of a Land Development Agency directly involved in the market.

The Commonwealth Government has rarely been directly involved in land supply. However, it has supported state initiatives through the 1972 Cities Commission, promoting the establishment of state land development agencies and the Better Cities pro-

gramme during the early 1990s. The Federal Government also has reviewed its own land holdings from time to time and released surplus land for residential development. The federal treasurer has recently announced another of these reviews.

Information on the demand and supply of land is generally monitored by a State Government agency with the information published in quarterly or annual reports. This land market information service has been a tool valued by industry and service providers for both short- and long-term planning of significant capital investment decisions. However, there has been a call for more national coordination of this data and its use to model the impact of alternative land area policies on land prices.

The question of land supply cannot be divorced from infrastructure provision. There has been a shift from broad based tax funding, long-term borrowing and recurrent user charges for infrastructure to more 'up-front' user pays mechanisms, like development contributions levied through the planning approvals system. Mostly this has had a positive effect on sustainable development by sending clearer price signals to developers that they should consolidate their projects within existing urban areas, where the cost of extending infrastructure is lower. In some jurisdictions, this practice has been taken too far, with up-front charges being applied to social infrastructure like schools and high level items, where the costs of provision are not particularly sensitive to location (e.g., water supply headworks).

Historically the public sector urban land authorities have played a role in moderating land prices by establishing a substantial presence in the fringe metropolitan land market. They have also promoted affordability and innovation in the land market through the provision of smaller lots and urban design and infrastructure measures aimed at better environmental outcomes. More recently they have responded to the emphasis in government policy on urban containment and have expanded their role in both inner and middle suburban redevelopment projects. A current example is the Revitalising Dandenong project in Melbourne, which is a partnership between the Victorian Government, VicUrban and the City of Dandenong.



3. SUSTAINABLE URBAN LAND MANAGEMENT



A key issue in managing urban growth at the urban fringe is the sequencing of development to allow for the orderly and timely provision of hard and social infrastructure. Whilst managing outward urban growth is important, a significant proportion of future housing needs will have to be accommodated by redevelopment and recycling of already developed land in the 'urban footprint'.

All metropolitan strategies in Australia today target existing urban areas to absorb more than 50 per cent of projected housing needs over the next 25 to 30 years. Investment is required into developing urban forms that can reduce travel demand and travel distance, place less pressure on sensitive environments and provide greater opportunities for social integration and better access to urban services.

Critics of these strategies argue that 'artificial' constraints on urban expansion place undue pressure on housing affordability. They point to the rapid increase in house prices over the past decade as evidence of this effect. However, price pressures are more likely to have been the product of strong demand pressure fuelled by low interest rates, buyer subsidies and favourable tax treatment of housing investment, plus a generally strong economy and buoyant labour market. The previously mentioned move to up-front user charges for local infrastructure reinforces price effects generated by these underlying demand pressures. Moreover, the critics overlook the productivity benefits of urban planning that ensure that new urban areas are strategically located and provided with infrastructure.

The Commonwealth Government needs to recognise the economic and fiscal benefits that flow from more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable cities.

In its policy statements the Planning Institute of Australia argues that 'more sustainable cities mean a prosperous nation', suggesting that 'more compact, public transport friendly cities could boost national GDP by up to 3% per annum'. In this context a national commitment to working in partnership with the states on sustainable development that includes effective land management and affordable housing outcomes is required.

Three policy ideas

1. Greater government support, both Commonwealth and State, is required for the strategic role that state land agencies can play in urban land markets. This will include a continuing role in strategic land release on the fringe of metropolitan cities. However, it is important that their role within existing metropolitan areas and regional centres is expanded so that these existing urban areas are able to provide for a greater share of population and household growth than they do at present.
2. The Commonwealth Government should re-establish a capacity to relate national population and household growth to changing urban settlement patterns and support State Governments in forecasting demand for new urban land and land redevelopment within existing urban areas. These forecasts should include analyses of how alternative urban settlement patterns impact on land prices.
3. The Commonwealth Government should establish a commitment to 'sustainable development' through payments to the State and Territory Governments based on their performance in achieving sustainable urban development through infrastructure provision and better integration of planning, housing and land management.

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4. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CITY FUTURES

The problem

Australian cities are at risk from global climate change. Predicted factors include higher temperatures, flooding, drought and related water resource problems, air quality and weather related health impacts and biodiversity losses. Many areas of the economy are predicted to be affected, with causes ranging from structural stress on existing urban infrastructure and the built environment to climate-related lifestyle changes, to increased costs and risk exposures for business and finance sectors. These impacts have potential long-term implications for Australia's environmental and economic sustainability and security.

Nevertheless, continuing uncertainty makes it hard for cities to act. Due to the availability and understanding of estimates and model based information, everyone from the mayor to individual households faces a cruel dilemma: ignore the risk at great peril, or act without much in the way of guidance as to what, when and where. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that Australian cities are largely unprepared to respond and adapt to climate change. To date, few Australian cities have investigated locale-specific biophysical impacts in any depth or at scales and time frames salient to current land use and planning activities.

Adapting to climate change while achieving deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions constitutes a significant policy challenge. This is particularly the case for urban areas, where much of the consumption that drives human-derived greenhouse gas emissions is centred. Australia has relatively high greenhouse gas emissions per capita. This presents two significant problems for Australian city futures. First, in order to meet global community obligations in reducing fossil fuel use to mitigate global climate effects, these current high emissions must be reduced significantly. For a high emission society such as Australia, the changes required are accordingly significant. Second, high energy users are more vulnerable to a future where greenhouse gas emissions will have a high cost, and where sustainable energy resources will be the norm. In order to build resilience, Australian communities can anticipate and adapt to climate change, including by reducing their need for fossil-fuel based energy resources.



4. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CITY FUTURES

Analysis

A fuller understanding of the implications of climate change for city futures is needed, as a basis for a systematic and sustained strategy for building resilience. Similarly, while mitigation through ending the use of fossil fuels could deliver carbon neutrality and high resilience to future changes in fossil energy costs/supply, an abrupt end to fossil fuel use without a well-planned transition and adoption of alternatives would be catastrophic for both social and economic sustainability. Cities which successfully adapt and achieve carbon neutral trajectories within the next decade will lay the foundations for being leading cities into the future. The following analysis highlights key areas which inform the basis for policy action.

Urban vulnerability must be defined with regard to accepted baselines in order to determine the marginal impacts of climate change influenced by human action, and to orient societal and policy responses. Perceived vulnerability to climate change in cities is multi-faceted and will have economic, ecological, technical, cultural and political dimensions. The biological and physical vulnerability of Australian cities should be mapped in ways that are already used to manage catastrophic hazards such as floods and fires; and for implementing the social, economic and environmental policies designed and controlled by cities. Similarly social vulnerability needs to be understood in ways amenable to policy intervention.

Australian cities are global cities and must collaborate in the response to climate change: They may not be 'megacities' but they are highly cosmopolitan and are nested in a set of global social, economic, technical and ecological interdependencies which have immediate, unavoidable and reciprocal impacts. As the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research puts it, 'urban climate mitigation and adaptation policy and behaviour can hardly be divorced from its global context'. This interdependence implies that Australian cities must find ways to collaborate with sister cities around the world to mitigate and adapt to climate change by thinking locally but also acting globally, with or without the support of the Commonwealth and State Governments.

Systematic approach and definition: There is currently a raised awareness of the need to progress towards resilient, 'carbon neutral' urban communities but no consensus or shared understanding of what this means. There is a good understanding of economic flows, for example, from regions to cities and across global markets. However, notwithstanding a large range of existing initiatives, the attribution and causation of emissions and relative resilience of existing ways of life are less well understood at the local, specific scale. A systematic approach to resilience and emissions mapping is needed in order to inform policy in developing future scenarios, directions and priorities.

Urban infrastructure: Impacts on telecommunications, energy, transport and water networks on the built environment and on coastal structures have been anticipated and estimated in only a generic sense and for the most part at a national or state and not local or municipal level. Yet the adaptation costs may overwhelm city level service providers and even raise the prospect of 'failed cities'.

Several starting points have already been created. For example, some aspects of household greenhouse gas emissions are being addressed in new housing by the introduction of new '5-star' building regulation requirements. While these are an important and useful step forward for Australian homes and households, they fall short of international efforts and are limited in scope. Then there is the 98 per cent of building stock that is not new and a significant retrofit and renovation programme is needed to build resilience and reduce emissions from this stock. Furthermore, the adaptability and greenhouse intensity of non-residential indoor spaces has received relatively little attention until recently and warrants a systematic and sustained effort in improving environmental performance through carefully considered planning, building and retrofitting. Across the physical urban infrastructure, a systematic understanding is needed of the carbon baseline and adaptation and mitigation challenges as a basis for policy action.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CITY FUTURES

Imports and supplies: Our cities import and export large quantities of goods and services which increase our vulnerability and resilience at the same time. These are currently major sources of existing emissions and hence future insecurity, and are therefore bound inextricably with city futures. Cleaner production technologies and more carbon-efficient methods of industrial and agricultural production allow the same flow of goods and services with less reliance on fossil fuels and lower emissions. A variety of initiatives are currently underway aimed at achieving such efficiencies. What are the vulnerability impacts of such trade and how can we enhance resilience without creating external insecurity that we may regret as climate change affects global energy and other markets such as long distance air travel? What will be the effects of climate change on global markets and on our primary trading partners? How will this affect our transport infrastructure?

Socio-technical factors: The analysis above deals mainly with technical fixes and efficiencies, including demand-side emissions reductions via energy efficiency and sustainable design strategies and technologies, and supply-side reduction, through fuel switching or reconfiguring energy services. However, a city community can only voluntarily become carbon neutral when businesses, institutions, households and individuals choose to act in concert to reduce the overall emissions of their activities and have the knowledge, skills and social frameworks in which to do so. Indeed, such intrinsic motivation and action competence are the only drivers found to be statistically reliable influences on sustainable practice. Apparent inelasticities in energy demand have been variously explained. However, notwithstanding some considerations of 'behaviour change' and 'education', there has been no systematic attempt to understand the interface between social practices and technical infrastructures against the backdrop of climate change and city futures. The various practices of applying technologies and imploring people to 'try harder' have high risks of failure while they remain uninformed by often-powerful cultural and social norms and practices.

Institutions and public services: The organisation of political and other public institutions is a key determinant in the robustness and effectiveness of climate change responses. At a practical level, for example, the arrangement of waste management services shapes the amount and practice of creating waste, and the greenhouse emissions from its treatment. The configuration, capacity and knowledge of institutional arrangements is critical in determining climate change and city futures, as is a sound understanding of the dynamics and interdependency of institutions with the practices of industry and communities.

Three policy ideas

Given these difficulties, what are some starting points for effective policy and urgent research topics needed to help Australian cities start to adapt to global climate change? Patterns of consumption in cities are not just a large part of the 'problem'; they are also a large part of the solution. Cities which successfully adapt and achieve carbon neutral trajectories within the next decade will lay the foundations for being leading cities into the future. As fossil fuels and greenhouse gases become increasingly important players in global economies, the more vulnerable cities will be those which have not developed significant adaptation and mitigation policies or put these into practice. Policy responses to date, such as the Energy Efficiency Opportunities Act, state carbon reduction market mechanisms, building regulations such as 5-star and other policy initiatives to ban incandescent light bulbs can be seen collectively as early attempts to tackle climate change, albeit piecemeal in their approach.



4. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CITY FUTURES

The most competitive cities in the future will likely be carbon neutral and climate proofed. What innovation and deployment policies will result in local technological research, development, adaptation and adoption that in turn will position Australian cities to be global climate leaders? The policy agenda must now gather and generate the knowledge to develop and implement appropriate signals to enable Australia to achieve deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions as follows. The following analysis highlights key areas which inform the basis for policy action.

1. **Urban Infrastructure:** A Commonwealth commitment is required to act in partnership with State Governments to significantly expand and build upon the 5-star building regulations, while concurrently developing a significant retrofit programme across the Australian building stock, with the aim of dramatically improving urban infrastructure emission performance and adaptation to weather extremes and other climate impacts. We also need to research the relationship between commercial and non-commercial density and related transport emissions and vulnerability, and evaluate and build on urban intensification and green infrastructure development. Unless deep enquiries are made of public and private 'rights' relating to consumption and climate change, future policy initiatives run the risk of avoiding the key issues and propagating delays in creating positive progress.
2. **Developing Institutional Capacity:** Political and public institutions are also critical determinants of public response. What moves these institutions to tackle climate change in all its complexity? A major Commonwealth Government review is required of the current institutional capacities relating to climate change and city futures across public service, manufacturing industry, trades and service industries, with a commitment to develop training and capacity building programmes in partnership with peak and professional bodies and training and educational institutions. To increase resilience and avoid maladaptation, steps must be taken to educate professional, industry and peak leaders; to maintain options in case climate change proves dangerous; to improve weather and climate measurement and modelling to detect and respond to early trends; and to avoid locking into rigid, long-term investments that cannot be changed.

3. New systems for understanding and tracking

progress: While many 'tools' and data sources exist which contribute towards our understanding of the interdependent vulnerabilities of climate and cities, a much more substantial and systematic approach is needed and this can only be achieved through significant policy intervention. New tools must be developed to assess and to integrate climate-driven mitigation policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions to ameliorate the rate of climate change with adaptation measures to adjust to the already inevitable impacts. Providing support for each and every urban community to undertake such studies and to develop anticipatory networks is critical to successful adaptive response. Urban fiscal and revenue raising policies and instruments for mitigating and adapting to climate change will play a critical role in leveraging private funds to respond to mitigation and adaptation imperatives at the city level, and to underpin these, fundamental and systematic links between financial and environmental flows need to be established across the economy. Similarly, cities are not only global, but also regional in that they dominate the peri-urban and regional hinterlands. While economic links are well understood, fundamental environmental-flows data and understanding is needed regarding the climate change related city-hinterland linkages.

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5. GETTING AROUND THE CITY: TRANSPORT POLICY

The problem

Australia's urban transport systems face serious problems that have implications for the efficiency and equity of our major cities.

These include rapidly rising travel demand, institutional fragmentation and failure, investment imbalances, growing environmental and social impacts and declining public confidence. Responsibility for provision of urban transport services primarily rests with State and Territory Governments. However, the Commonwealth Government influences urban transport through funding, taxation and regulatory frameworks and has a number of opportunities to improve the environmental sustainability, social equity and economic efficiency of urban transport policy. This paper discusses these problems, particularly in relation to the role of the Commonwealth Government to improve urban transport in Australian cities.

Analysis

a. Environmental sustainability - Private motor vehicle use is rising faster than population growth in Australian cities. This vehicle use has a number of environmental impacts, including local effects such as increased air pollution and noise, greenhouse gas emissions and growing dependence on increasingly insecure global petroleum supplies for urban transport.

One-fifth of Australia's greenhouse emissions are produced by the transport sector with 75 per cent of these produced by private motor vehicles. Rising motor vehicle use impedes government achievement of many environmental policy objectives. Current environmental legislation does not adequately regulate the environmental effects from transport, such as greenhouse emissions. Global petroleum supply security is declining, both in terms of physical petroleum production and delivery. Rising fuel costs have major implications for highly car dependent cities.

Government role: The current low policy status afforded by Commonwealth Government policy agencies to the environmental performance of urban transport systems contributes to and exacerbates these problems.



5. GETTING AROUND THE CITY: TRANSPORT POLICY



b. Economic efficiency - Transport systems are critical to the economic functioning of Australian cities. The movement of people and goods depends on efficient road, freight, public transport and walking and cycling networks. Single-occupant motor vehicles continue to be supported by State and Territory Governments as the dominant mode of urban travel. Investment biases towards private motor vehicles have resulted in strong growth in private vehicle use in most cities and constrained State Government capacity to meet travel demand.

Many federally funded urban roads carry heavy private passenger vehicle loads which compete for space with freight. Public transport systems are beset with ongoing problems of public and private under investment, institutional fragmentation and competition, poor modal integration and policy settings that favour the private car. Privatisation of transport networks has generated greater subsidy burdens while creating barriers to improved service provision. High levels of dependence on private motor vehicles impose costs on the Australian Government through subsidies such as the Fringe Benefits Tax Exemption.

Government role: Problems of poor economic efficiency in transport systems are in part due to Commonwealth Government transport funding biases towards roads, support for failed privatisation programmes and poor specification of taxation regimes for transport.

5. GETTING AROUND THE CITY: TRANSPORT POLICY

c. Social equity - Transport systems also influence the equitable distribution of social opportunity and disadvantage in Australian cities by underpinning the distribution of urban land uses such as housing and levels of household access to employment, education, retail and community services. Transport systems mediate urban social opportunity and disadvantage and can interact with housing markets to produce 'forced car use' in many outer-urban zones of Australia's cities and can impose high transport cost on modest-income households.

High private travel costs and limited availability of alternative travel modes such as public transport in many outer suburban areas exacerbate social disadvantage by impeding access to employment, education and community services. Road capacity expansion can increase community disadvantage through social dislocation and isolating neighbourhoods from other neighbourhoods and local services.

The dominance of private motor car travel is widely recognised as limiting the achievement of health benefits through transport-related physical activity. These significant health benefits are not currently costed in Australian transport project or policy appraisals. Transport systems mediate household exposure to financial and social risk from rising fuel prices, inflation and mortgage interest costs especially in outer suburban areas of Australia's cities, compounded by inadequate provision of public transport and poor integration with land-use planning.

Government role: Commonwealth Government policy agencies currently lack an adequate policy perspective on the social effects of transport systems. This includes weak cross-agency perspectives on health, labour market participation and community aspects of transport.

Three policy ideas

The Commonwealth Government funds significant investment in transport systems. However, poor policy oversight and allocation mechanisms mean this funding programme often fails to broadly address environmental, social and economic objectives. There are three clear policy areas where the Commonwealth Government could make changes that would have a significant impact on the evaluation, funding, management, subsidisation and regulation of transport systems.

These changes would remove biases that distort Commonwealth Government policy choices and funding allocation which in turn impact on personal travel choices and institutional preferences towards the private motor car. The proposed policy shifts would not directly favour alternative modes. Rather, these changes would let alternative modes, such as public transport, compete for resources on an equal policy footing.

Institutional reform: Federal capacity

The environmental, social and economic challenges of transport systems are currently poorly addressed by the Commonwealth Government. There is a clear need for institutional change at the federal level to improve the quality of transport policy advice and to reconfigure the intent and purpose of Commonwealth Government transport policy and funding.

1. The Australian Government should disestablish the Department of Transport and Regional Services and establish a new transport policy agency that is better engaged with broader environmental, social and economic policy. This should be accompanied by the rebuilding and recruitment of new institutional analytical capacity in environmental and social transport linkages. This new agency should be responsible for redesigning Commonwealth Government transport funding allocations. Current Commonwealth Government transport research funding should be expanded beyond road and freight modes to address the urban environmental, social and economic dimensions of transport.

5. GETTING AROUND THE CITY: TRANSPORT POLICY

Funding reform: AusLink

AusLink currently supports investment in transport projects of 'national importance'. Approximately \$30 billion will be spent through AusLink between 2006/2007 and 2013/2014 yet this funding is poorly expended because the programme model is biased towards road projects and does not support urban passenger transport. These limitations distort personal urban travel behaviour by private motor vehicle use over public transport investment.

- The Commonwealth Government should amend the AusLink framework and project funding allocation criteria to support urban public transport on an equal assessment basis to road and rail freight projects. Assessment criteria should be developed by the new federal transport agency to give new emphasis to environmental and social criteria.

Metropolitan demonstration projects

Outer suburban transport networks in most Australian cities are inadequate to provide a viable alternative mode choice to private motor vehicles for most households, often despite the presence of significant infrastructure such as heavy rail networks. There is a need for a significant upgrade of outer-suburban public transport networks. These upgrades should use the European Union's Hi-Trans public transport network planning model (which was developed from Australian research).

- The Commonwealth Government should fund a set of demonstration projects to develop high quality public transport networks in selected outer suburban areas of Australian cities, with a focus on network efficiency across public transport modes. Demonstration projects should be based on the EU's Hi-Trans principles and should seek to achieve high network coverage through integrated bus routes operating at high (15-minute headway) frequencies from early mornings until late evenings and linked to employment, education and community centres and metropolitan rail networks.

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6. HEALTHY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

The problem

There is growing concern about rising rates of serious physical and psychological conditions – such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, depression and emotional stress – in the urban populations of developed nations.

Research shows that urban planning and health patterns are closely related. Urban sprawl, with its low residential densities, car dependency and separation of home and work, is being linked to behaviour patterns that contribute to poor physical and mental health. Individuals are dissuaded from taking regular physical exercise in heavily trafficked, polluted and often unsafe and unpleasant environments. In many suburban localities shops are a long way from houses so it is difficult to get there other than by car. Indeed, many large shopping centres are designed with the car user in mind and are very unfriendly to pedestrians. Increasingly, children do not walk to school or play games outdoors. The single-family dwelling can be an isolating residential form, particularly for the elderly and disabled. People who must travel long distances from home to work often do not have the time or energy to form meaningful relationships with their neighbours. Family relationships can also suffer from long absences from home. These factors result in reduced community interaction and social capital.

Analysis

For much of the past 100 years, urban planners and health professionals and policy makers have failed to integrate health, well-being and equity as a core consideration of their work. This has been exacerbated by fragmented economic, planning and policies that have shifted the ecological, social and health costs of inappropriate development. Suburban sprawl, loss of habitat and biodiversity, car dependency, gentrification of inner urban areas, privatisation of public space, and marginalisation of lower income populations are

some of the results. Eleven key parameters have been identified for healthy cities, communities and towns.

1. A clean, safe, high-quality environment (including housing).
2. An ecosystem that is stable now and sustainable in the long term.
3. A strong, mutually supportive and non-exploitative community.
4. A high degree of public participation in and control over the decisions affecting life, health and well-being.
5. The meeting of basic needs (food, water, shelter, income, safety, work) for all people.
6. Access to a wide variety of experiences and resources, with the possibility of multiple contacts, interaction, and communication.
7. A diverse, vital and innovative economy.
8. Encouragement of connections with the past, with the varied cultural and biological heritage, and with other groups and individuals.
9. A city form (design) that is compatible with and enhances the preceding parameters and forms of behaviour.
10. An optimum level of appropriate public health and sick care services accessible to all.
11. High health status (both high positive health status and low disease status).

These parameters show us that health and well-being have many determinants that are influenced by policy and activity in many different sectors and institutions. These include infrastructure planning, urban design, architecture, the business sector, developers, environment, education, art and culture.

All the components of Urban 45 (strengthening communities and regeneration, housing, urban vitality and culture, crime, ageing, globalisation and the urban economy, multiculturalism and social cohesion, learning cities, urban sprawl, climate change and city futures, child-friendly cities, getting around the city,

6. HEALTHY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

indigenous interests) can be addressed within a healthy cities and communities framework. Governments need to understand the importance of integrated planning approaches that consider the overall well-being of the whole person and the whole community.

'Health' needs to be seen as everyone's business, and not just the role of the health sector. Health has been defined as 'the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief or economic and social condition'. From an Indigenous perspective, health is not just the physical well-being of the individual, but the social, emotional and cultural well-being of the whole community.

Another way of viewing health is in terms of human potential, and human capital. Human capital grows when development encourages the balanced growth of social capital, environmental capital and economic capital. Environmental and social problems arise when economic capital is valued above and beyond social and natural capital, and the environmental and social consequences

of economic growth are not considered when making economic decisions or reporting on economic activity.

Cities and communities thus need to be seen as far more than simply as places to generate economic growth. History, culture and social interaction are also essential to overall health and well-being. As Healthy Cities co-founder, Dr Trevor Hancock has stated, 'surely the ultimate purpose of communities, governments and societies is the development of human beings (citizens) so they can achieve their maximum potential?'

Used by thousands of cities and municipalities worldwide, the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities approach is based on the recognition that city and urban environments affect citizens' health, and that healthy municipal public policy is needed to effect change. Hancock conceived of a Healthy Cities and Communities model in which human health and well-being – or human capital – is the ultimate outcome of a sustained, integrated effort to build community (social) capital, environmental capital and economic capital. Hancock presented six interlocking elements in his model, as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Elements of a healthy city or community

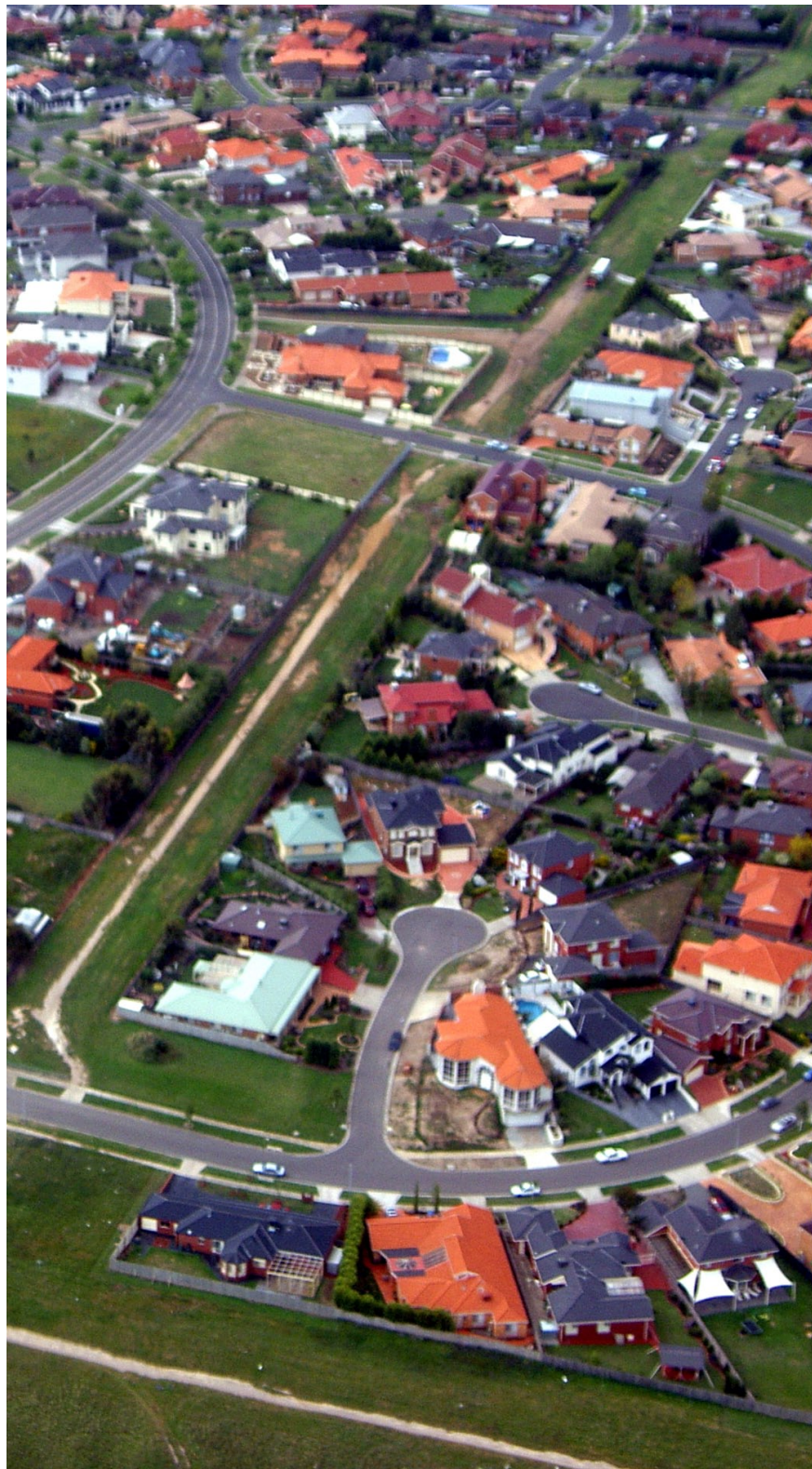
Sustainability	Human health depends upon ecosystem health. Planning must protect and enhance ecosystem health.
Liveability	We are 80% urbanised and spend 90% of our time indoors, so the built environment is our 'natural' environment. Planning must create liveable and safe built environments for people.
Equity	Poorer people live downwind, downstream and downhill, live in the worst homes and neighbourhoods, have the worst working conditions. Planning must address and reduce, and certainly not exacerbate these conditions.
Conviviality	Humans are social animals; our health is linked to our social networks. Planning must encourage and support social interaction, and not foster social isolation or segregation.
Viability	We are what we eat, drink and breathe. Planning must not contribute to the burden of toxicity to which people are exposed.
Prosperity	Both individuals and communities need enough wealth to acquire the basic needs for health. Planning should not impose unwanted additional costs on people or communities.

6. HEALTHY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

A healthy city is 'one that is continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing to their maximum potential.'

Linking the seminal Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion with evidence on the social determinants of health, 'Healthy Cities Projects' are characterised by broad-based, intersectoral political commitment to health and well-being in its deepest ecological sense; commitment to innovation; an embrace of democratic community participation; and a resultant healthy public policy.

Health and well-being must be planned and built 'into' cities; this process is presented as everyone's business. Political endorsement is seen as crucial to ensuring intersectoral collaboration. Systems for participatory decision making must be developed to ensure that all voices are heard, especially those of marginalised people



6. HEALTHY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Three policy ideas

We need a national policy and planning environment that encourages integrated planning, intersectoral collaboration across all levels of government and private enterprise, and informed community engagement.

1. Detailed planning requirements are needed through policy and legislation that foster sustainability, liveability, equity, conviviality, viability and prosperity – for example, through street connectivity, urban density, walking and cycling, local shopping, recreation and work destinations, grey water recycling, solar energy and safe environments.
2. The potential health impacts of any policy proposals and development applications must be considered as key considerations. The 'Watch Out For Health – Planning Checklist', developed by the British National Health Service's Healthy Urban Design Unit for use in the London Plan, offers an excellent example.
3. An enabling economic policy framework is needed to encourage healthy and sustainable planning. Tax incentives and regulations are needed for private developers to incorporate healthy urban design, affordable housing, intergenerational equity and ecological sustainability measures into developments.

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7. ACCOMMODATING THE GREYING CITY

The problem

The ageing of the population both numerically and structurally is the most dramatic change that will occur to Australia's population over the next 50 years. Population ageing will have a profound impact on the functioning of Australia's cities and the ability of Australia's housing stock to meet demand.

At the 2006 Census 13.3 per cent of Australia's population was aged 65 years and over and 23 per cent of private households were occupied by at least one older person. By 2021 nearly one-fifth (19 per cent) of the population will be aged 65 years and over and it is estimated that every four in ten households will be occupied by at least one older person, with many living alone. Growth in the population aged 85 years and over is projected to be even more pronounced, more than doubling between 2001 and 2021 to more than 500 000 people and by 2041 they will number over 1.2 million. Of course these are projections and it is possible they may be an undercount of what will happen if net overseas migration is less than 100 000 persons per year, the Total Fertility Rate continues to decline and life expectancy continues to increase.

The 'Baby Boom' generation – those born between 1946 and 1961 – is of particular significance because it is so much larger than its predecessor, outnumbering them by approximately 1.6 million persons at the 2006 Census. This generation is also important because their household structures, experience within the labour market and expectations in retirement – including their housing aspirations – differ from those of earlier generations. How can the 'boomers' housing aspirations be met given that most will continue to reside in cities where housing markets have been particularly prone to steep increases in housing costs, and where housing and neighbourhoods with urban services suitable and affordable to the elderly are already becoming scarce?

In this context it is noteworthy that ageing of the population is accompanied by a system of affordable housing supply that is endangered. Conventional public housing has been a small, but important, part of the Australian housing system over the last 60 years. But the number of publicly owned dwellings is declining rather than growing. They now represent less than 15 per cent of all rental dwellings following a loss of 10, 000 homes in the last five years.

Recently the Federal Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon Mal Brough, asked 'Where have all the houses gone?' noting that in 2005 there were 13 fewer publicly owned houses in Australia than in 1997, despite Commonwealth Government funding of \$9.6 billion over the last decade. Such questioning by the federal minister overlooks the cost of maintenance and the reality of operating deficits resulting from the very low incomes of public housing tenants. However, it does highlight the decline of the sector and this decline is expected to continue.

Both the Coalition and the Labor parties have signalled new developments in housing policy in the lead-up to the federal election but regardless of national policy change, the pace of the decline of public housing is likely to quicken in some parts of Australia. For example, in March 2007 South Australia's Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon Jay Weatherill, announced an accelerated programme of public



7. ACCOMMODATING THE GREYING CITY

housing sales that will transfer a further 8,000 properties away from government ownership by 2012–13.

Critically, public housing, which historically has been an important tenure for older low income households, may no longer be a housing option for this group. In addition, other affordable housing options – such as Independent Living Units – have stagnated since the removal of federal subsidies two decades ago. The changing demography of Australian cities and the loss of housing opportunities affordable to low income elderly Australians mean that housing is an urban service of vital importance to the future health of our cities.

Analysis

Diversity in housing provision for older Australians - Current estimates suggest around 3 per cent of older Australians live in self-care retirement villages compared with around 7 per cent of US citizens. There is no clear definition of what constitutes a retirement village and the legal definitions vary between the States and Territories. In fact it has been suggested that the term 'retirement village' may be 'too generic for the myriad of forms of accommodation that have evolved, and continue to evolve under this mantra'. Retirement villages are, however, characterised by a number of features. They are segregated housing complexes specifically for aged people which includes a range of accommodation from independent living units to hostels to nursing homes.

In the next 10 to 15 years in Australia there is likely to be considerable growth in the retirement village sector. This will be due to the ageing of the population and active marketing of retirement villages to the older population as a housing and lifestyle option. New demand over the next decade or so will stem from people who are close to retir-

ing and who will move into the older age groups over this time. It is assumed their needs and aspirations are similar to those retirees who have already taken up retirement village living. There is little research about how the baby boom generation will view retirement village living. Many baby boomers will want to age in their own home, or live in housing outside a village.

We can be certain that the majority of baby boomers will not move into a retirement village and that very few will participate in a 'seachange' or 'treechange' experience. Indeed, those that move to the coast or the country in their fifties and early sixties often find themselves moving back to the city as they age and their health and other needs increase. Policies are needed, therefore, that support a variety of housing options with respect to the structure of the dwelling, diverse tenure arrangements and differing price points within the market.

Governments also need to initiate – and in some instances strengthen – policies and programmes that support people to age in place. There is a need for a formal strategy on the housing of the older population.

Strengthening the communities in which older Australians live - Recent research has emphasised that most older Australians want to grow old in the communities and neighbourhoods in which they currently live. Older Australians make an important contribution to the well-being of the broader community: they are the group most likely to serve as volunteers for a whole range of community activities and many play an important role in the care of children. Good urban policy provides a range of housing opportunities in all parts of the city and in all price ranges. This goal could be achieved by local governments reviewing their planning systems to ensure that older members of their communities can find attractive and appropriate properties within the market. There is also a need for State and Territory Governments to stimulate the supply of purpose-built and affordable aged housing in all parts of the city, as well as in regional Australia. This could take the form of purpose-built public housing or through initiatives undertaken with partners that increase the supply of social housing more generally.



7. ACCOMMODATING THE GREYING CITY

Adaptable housing - The rate of disability within the population increases with age and many households are forced to experience the cost and expense of movement because they can no longer live in their family home. A commitment to adaptable housing policies by Australian governments through the Building Code of Australia would ensure the construction of new housing that is more in tune with people's needs as they age. It would also benefit the 1.2 million Australians affected by a disability not related to age. Building adaptable housing is more expensive than the construction of conventional dwellings, but the price differential is not great and it is far cheaper to build an adaptable home at construction than to retrofit as needs arise. Adaptable homes are also more appropriate for households with infants and small children. Greater access to adaptable housing in all tenures would reduce the impost on public health budgets as older Australians would be able to stay in their own home for longer and would do so with a greater level of well-being.

Urban services for all - Good housing isn't just about bricks and mortar. While the immediate environment, the home, is very important to well-being and one's ability to remain independent, equally important is the influence, or fit, of the wider environment, the neighbourhood, local region or city. The quality of the physical environment (quality of footpaths, traffic levels, provision of walking and cycling tracks), the proximity to services and facilities (public transport, shops, health centre, post office), the provision of an attractive environment (parks, trees, interesting scenery) and a pleasant social environment providing opportunities for social interaction and integration are critical.

Older Australians are often more dependent on locally provided services than other groups, but programmes and policies that meet the service needs of this group also benefit other groups within Australian society. Families with young children, couple-only households where both partners work, and younger people living alone or in groups are all better off when there is good access to parks, rail transport, buses, public meeting places, community health centres and other urban services. All tiers of government have a role in prepar-



ing for the 'greying' of Australian cities and regions. Public transport, appropriate and affordable housing, good quality urban services and strong communities will be fundamental for a successful, older Australia. Governments need to formally commit to planning for an older population that integrates service provision into the fabric of our cities. For some governments this will represent the real 'seachange'.

Three policy ideas

1. Build strong, well-resourced communities. Governments have the capacity to plan for an ageing population and can work to improve the fabric of our cities by improving public transport and the provision of services. Urban planning that allows for increasing urban densities will result in better access to services, enhance the viability of public transport and provide options for housing in older age. Community building initiatives will have positive benefits for the older population, but also their families, neighbours, friends and those who rely upon volunteer services.

7. ACCOMMODATING THE GREYING CITY

2. Not 'seachange', not 'treechange' but 'needchange'. The real challenge for housing and urban policy with an ageing population isn't the shift of some households to attractive coastal or rural locations. Instead there is an ongoing need to provide housing and services that meet the needs of the older population and that includes providing a range of housing – including social and affordable housing – in the neighbourhoods where people live already. Access to public transport and services is a key ingredient in this policy mix. Governments should make a formal commitment to the development of policies on housing and urban services for the aged.
3. Build housing that is for life, not just for sale. The acceptance of adaptable housing principles into the Building Code of Australia would result in more appropriate housing for all segments of Australian society. Older Australians would benefit, but so too would families with young children and persons with a disability.

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8. MULTICULTURALISM AND SOCIAL COHESION

The problem

'Multiculturalism' is a contested term but for the purposes of this paper it refers to a set of positive social principles that inform government policies to manage cultural diversity. Since the mid-1970s, Australian governments (albeit with different degrees of enthusiasm) have generally supported the principles of multiculturalism through an inclusive migration policy and by providing resources to assist migrant settlement.

Analysis

The benefits of these policies are considerable. Australia has become a successful cosmopolitan society with as many as 200 different ethnicities, 90 languages and 80 different religions. Migrants from a non-English speaking background have generally been welcomed and it is possible for migrants to maintain both a sense of their own former national identity alongside a feeling of 'belonging' to their new country. Australian cities are vibrant places where individuals from different backgrounds are able to live in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The opportunities and quality of life available are important factors to explain why the number of people seeking to move to Australia has remained so high.

While there has always been opposition from some quarters to multiculturalism, it is apparent that in the last few years the Government has sought to undermine multiculturalism by introducing new policies. For example, the regulations enabling permanent residents to become Australian citizens will require a longer stay in Australia (four years) and applicants will be required to pass a citizenship test that will assess both a knowledge of 'Australian values' and proficiency in the English language. In addition, to signify a break with the past, the Department of Immigration, Multicultural

and Indigenous Affairs has been renamed the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. A Government parliamentary secretary rather than a Cabinet minister now manages issues relating to multiculturalism. Andrew Robb MP (at the time the parliamentary secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship) justified the change in multicultural policy in a speech he made at the Australian National University in November 2006:

'Some Australians worry that progressively the term multicultural has been transformed by some interest groups into a philosophy, a philosophy which puts allegiances to original culture ahead of national loyalty, a philosophy which fosters separate development, a federation of ethnic cultures, not one community ... advocating the equality of culture, or a community of separate cultures fosters a rights mentality, rather than a responsibilities mentality. It is divisive. It works against quick and effective integration.'

The reasons for this shift in policy are complex but the most compelling explanation is that the Government is acting to undermine multiculturalism on the basis that it will signify a stance on national identity that will prove popular with parts of the electorate. The Government, in pursuing this policy, has sought to capitalise on a number of events to justify its new stance. First, there has been the political fallout following 9/11, including the Bali and London bombs. The threat of ter-



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riorism has provided an opportunity for governments in countries such as the US, UK and Australia to critique the philosophy underpinning multiculturalism. Some of the fiercest critics of multiculturalism have even gone so far as to suggest it should be abandoned in favour of a more explicit set of assimilationist policies.

Second, a deliberate focus by the Government on issues relating to border control has spurred public unease about multiculturalism. For example, the detention and offshore processing of some asylum seekers has generated anxiety within certain migrant communities, as well as tarnishing Australia's standing internationally.

Third, the riots on the beaches of Cronulla, Sydney in early 2006, mainly involving young men from Anglo-Celtic and Middle-Eastern backgrounds, provided further ammu-

nition for those seeking to undermine Australia's commitment to multiculturalism. The events were widely reported in the media in a very simplistic way and some commentators sought to use the riots as a pretext to launch a diatribe against Australians of Middle-Eastern descent.

What are we to make of the shift in policies? Ostensibly, the Government has sought to convey that policies towards multiculturalism and immigration require modification to encourage migrants to subscribe to a shared set of 'Australian' values including the rule of law, gender equality, democracy and the principle of a 'fair go'. However, a more critical interpretation would link the shift in policy to the developments set out above. Taken as a whole, the Government policies signal the abandonment of consensus on the merits of multiculturalism and the



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advance of a more insular vision emphasising a unitary Australian identity.

Even though many of the official Government statements on immigration appear banal, they should not be viewed as evidence to assuage our concerns. On the contrary, the attempt by the Government to codify 'Australian' values and inculcate new migrants by introducing a citizenship test is an especially disturbing development. Cultural values are dynamic and the outcome of a complex set of social interactions – they cannot be imposed through formal tests.

In terms of practice, the perception that migrants, whose first language is not English, are different from other Australians will exacerbate discrimination in the employment and housing markets. Recent data from the 2006 census indicate that non-English speaking migrants are more likely to be economically disadvantaged than others who settle in Australia. Over time, this disadvantage becomes less onerous as English language proficiency improves and employment networks are established, but it has meant that many individuals (particularly refugees) require intensive support when they move to Australia. In the longer term, there is evidence that many individuals from migrant communities whose first language is not English establish successful businesses and employment opportunities for others in their communities.

While it is important not to dismiss the threat of terrorism in Australia or the reactionary proclamations of certain individuals, the Government's response towards multiculturalism may inadvertently buttress the support for extremist ideologies. Furthermore, there is a danger that attacking the precepts of multiculturalism will accentuate the 'difference' rather than commonality and shared values of people living in Australia. A more insightful form of Government intervention would address the linkages between social disadvantage and the rise of extremist policies. It is no coincidence that support for reactionary forms of politics is most evident in urban settings where educational opportunities and employment prospects are limited.

Safeguarding multiculturalism - For the supporters of an open and diverse society, it is necessary not just to criticise the Government for its recent stance but also to challenge the perpetrators of reactionary forms of politics through an engagement with the ideas and values that are being propagated. The novelist Hanif Kureishi in an article for The Guardian newspaper wrote: 'multiculturalism is not a superficial exchange of festivals and food, but a robust and committed exchange of ideas'. Kureishi's observation is important because multiculturalism has been used in some quarters as a cover for bigotry.

The advocates of multiculturalism need to be more robust in defending its philosophy by challenging those groups who have sought to use multiculturalism as a pretext for promoting separatist forms of identity politics. Asked about the spectre of terrorism in an interview for The Guardian, the Tasmanian author Richard Flanagan warned that 'the danger for western societies at the moment is that we seek to protect ourselves by creating and feeding difference, and by making people feel alienated, and that it's not possible to share with other human beings the possibility of being human. The best defence we can offer against evil and the possibility of the terrible is by letting people back in'.

Multiculturalism has been a successful set of social principles because of the emphasis placed on the commonalities and shared values of different cultures and religions. The attempts to undermine it jeopardise some of the dynamic benefits that have accrued over the last 30 years.

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Three policy ideas

1. The supporters of an open and diverse society need to make their case heard in both the media and policy forums by making explicit how multiculturalism has benefited Australian cities economically and culturally. Additional funds should be made available to support networks and agencies (e.g., interfaith groups, sporting and educational establishments) that promote tolerance and encourage interaction amongst different communities.
2. The Government's deliberate undermining of multiculturalism as a policy objective needs to be challenged. Imposing a narrow form of 'Australian' identity, in particular through the introduction of a citizenship test, risks exacerbating tensions and deterring potential migrants from choosing Australia as a place to settle.
3. The maintenance of a successful multicultural society requires policies that alleviate the causal factors of social inequality. For example, additional resources are required to help new migrants access housing, childcare provision, and education to develop their English language proficiency.

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9. CHILD-FRIENDLY CITIES

The problem

Australia's cities have become less family friendly and less congenial for children. Fiona Stanley AO, 2003 Australian of the Year, believes that our urban communities are becoming toxic for children.

In contrast to earlier phases of Australian urbanisation, urban physical changes are reinforcing mounting socio-economic pressures on urban families and children. The process of urban compaction has often neglected children's needs and has been marked by

a loss of play space and a shift to residential governance (strata title) that is sometimes hostile to children. Many young people continue to experience isolation and alienation in outer urban master-planned estates. Cities have become less accommodating to disadvantaged families. Many low income families struggle to raise children in inappropriate housing, often the oldest stock with poor amenity standards, or cramped flats in low value locations. The compact city must be humane, and child-centred, not merely ecologically sustainable. Planning systems, once mindful of children's needs, seem to have lost this important traditional concern.

Analysis

Demographic imbalance in debates and policy

- Popular and policy debates are transfixed by the important issue of population ageing. Children seem to have disappeared from public focus, only to return in bouts of wild panic about abuse and various other calamities that occasionally touch young lives. Australia's future will not be exclusively decided by the fortunes of ageing baby boomers and their seachange or treechange communities. It will also be shaped by the health of our heartlands, the suburbs where the great majority of Australians live, especially families and children. Seachange areas may grey but many of our suburban regions will see growing not declining numbers of children.

The recent rise in national birth rates seems to have been concentrated in the outer suburbs and in new inner city baby boom zones. But the balance is shifting. While the greatest number of young children is still found in the suburbs, the inner-city baby revival gathers pace. In Sydney, for example, the percentage increase in the numbers of under fives between 2001 and 2006 reached 28% in Leichhardt in the inner west and 22% in North Sydney (albeit from a low base), while numbers fell by 8% in Campbelltown and 7% in Penrith, both maturing outer suburban areas. But suburban expansion still attracts the families with young children. Under fives increased by 19% in Baulkham Hills where much of the new fringe development in Sydney over the period was located.



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The recent growth of children in inner city regions is especially notable and concerning because these same areas are experiencing compaction and loss of recreation space. The marginalisation of children and young people in new metropolitan planning and urban management strategies may help to explain general community discontent with many urban consolidation outcomes. Arguably, a more child-focused approach to urban management would produce more humane and liveable environments, at all densities, and contribute significantly to the improvement of general community well-being.

Urban social stress - Australia has become an immensely wealthier country over the past three decades, but this material enrichment has been accompanied by a startling decline in the health and well-being of our children. A similar pattern of simultaneously rising rates of wealth and morbidity has been confirmed in other developed countries. The Canadian health researchers, Daniel Keating and Clyde Hertzman, have described this as 'Modernity's Paradox'. Fiona Stanley, epidemiologist

and 2003 Australian of the Year, cites a range of physical and mental health indicators which show that 'whilst death rates are low and life expectancy is terrific, trends in almost all other outcomes [for children] have got worse'. Some of the indicators that have registered declines for children during the past decade include: birth weight, post-neonatal mortality (Aboriginal children), asthma and diabetes, obesity, intellectual disability, depression, anxiety, behavioural problems, drug use and child abuse.

Cities and urban regions are hot spots of social stress for families and children: Clearly, our nation's economic prosperity has failed to deliver the social dividend that was promised. While Australia prospers economically, alarm bells have been sounding in the suburbs – witness increases in divorce, family violence, child abuse, homelessness, working hours and social isolation.

Social polarisation is a powerful stress on the well-being of children generally. The increased concentration of the poor, often in declining middle areas of our cities, heightens the risk of negative 'neighbourhood effects' on children's development'. At the same time, the increased sorting of wealthier households into spatially discrete, sometimes exclusionary, communities undermines the healthy socialisation of children from this end of the wealth spectrum.

Urban physical and environmental stress - Australia's cities and urban regions are experiencing a prolonged period of intensification of social shifts, economic activity and built environment changes. The intensity of urban life has risen dramatically and continues to do so, raising threats to the well-being of children and families. Some of the intensification is planned and intentional, such as urban consolidation. Other forces of intensification are less scripted and arise from the wider play of market forces, including economic globalisation. Neither intentional nor unintentional intensification should be regarded critically, especially considering the unique vulnerability of children to environmental and social stress.



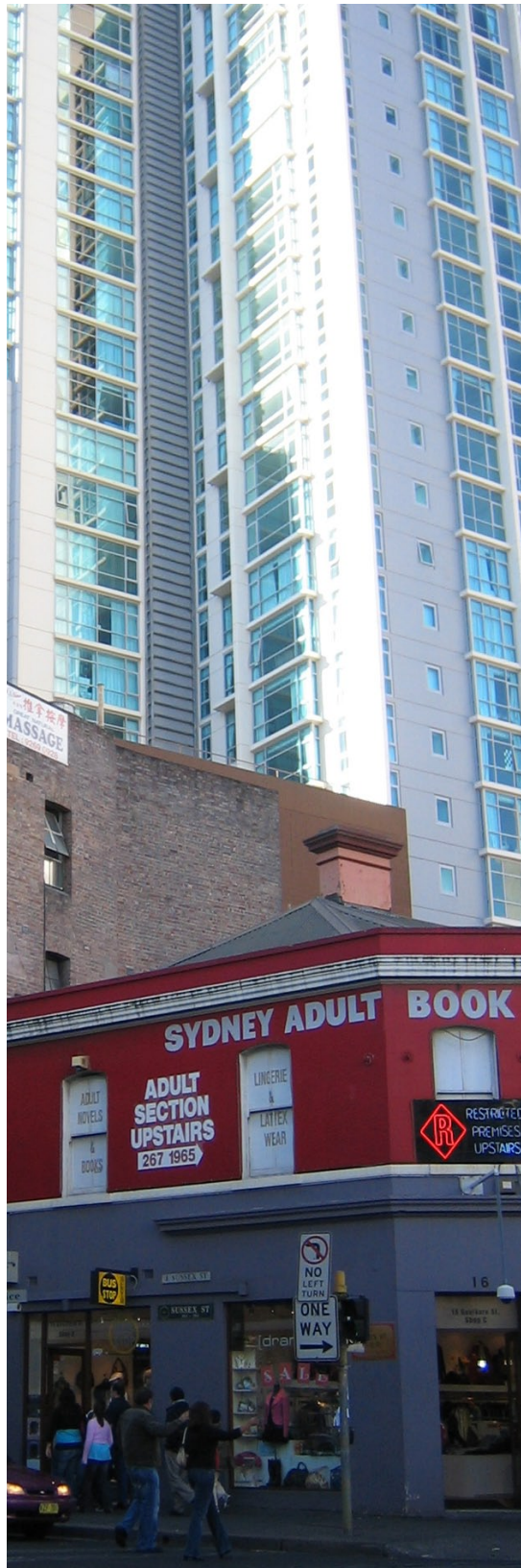
9. CHILD-FRIENDLY CITIES

Increased residential intensification via urban consolidation policy has the potential to contribute to reducing ecological stress on urban systems generally, but must not be allowed to place new pressures on children and those that care for them. Australia's major cities are experiencing planned transition to higher densities. This is engineering a rapid change in the living circumstances and housing choices of many Australians, including households with children. In Sydney, more higher-density dwellings were built between 1981 and 2001 than separate houses.

The process while planned has been largely market-delivered producing many poorly designed and sited developments. Moreover, the vast majority of these new higher-density dwellings are small, offering one or two bedrooms at most, unsuitable for raising families.

Examples of higher density developments that accommodate, let alone nurture, children's needs are few in number. Additionally, the private residential governance associated with higher density development (strata title) in some instances actually legislates against children, for example by banning their play in common areas. Under current planning and development trends, children have effectively been planned out of the new compact city. However, higher density development can be designed with children in mind and needs to be so if the compact city is to be socially inclusive and sustainable.

Suburban, lower density regions exhibit other pressures on children's well-being, including car dependency, isolation from services, the loss of backyard space and the internalisation of everyday activity in ever larger houses. Further, there is evidence that young people experience isolation and alienation in outer areas, including within master-planned estates that otherwise have been designed to be attractive to families. Rising levels of pollution and traffic congestion are further dimensions that affect children's well-being throughout the urban fabric.



9. CHILD-FRIENDLY CITIES

Three policy ideas

1. Establish a Commonwealth Children's Commission with a specific urban remit – to work with state equivalents to review metropolitan planning policies to assess all residential developments as to their suitability for children, backed by appropriate legislation. This would include the outlawing of strata by-laws that ban children from developments of more than 10 dwellings.
2. Commonwealth health and housing policy frameworks to emphasise needs of children and families in cities and fund new forms of research based intervention that would improve the urban public and environmental health of children and their carers.
3. Child-friendly local planning policies that will ensure all residential developments over 10 dwellings are planned to be inclusive of children and supportive of families, including dwellings of sufficient size to offer family housing opportunities.

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10. INDIGENOUS URBAN DISADVANTAGE

The problem

The average life expectancy of Indigenous Australians remains 17 years less than that of non-Indigenous Australians. They experience poorer health, poorer levels of housing, higher levels of unemployment and poorer levels of education. In many ways, the socio-economic position of Indigenous Australians raises the perennial question of how we can accommodate the special needs of a culturally distinct and historically marginalised minority in a democracy. Additionally, the special position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first peoples of Australia places them in a unique cultural, political, legal and historical position within Australian society. While many Australians would agree that issues around Indigenous disadvantage should be a priority, there is often disagreement about how to best address these issues. Also, while the statistics show that Indigenous communities – whether urban, rural or remote – all suffer from disadvantage, there has been an increasing emphasis on diverting resources to northern and remote Aboriginal communities at the expense of urban and rural communities.

This focus on remote communities has been driven by the findings of the Commonwealth Grants Commission's 2001 Report on Indigenous Funding. The report

identified areas of relative need and found that those areas were predominantly in remote areas. However, some of the Commissioners themselves were unhappy with this as a measure of 'need' and thought that it would have been better to analyse disadvantage in terms of absolute need rather than relative need. That is, while the report focused on where the greatest need was so that limited resources could be shifted there, it was believed that the correct process should have been to assess the needs of everyone. After all, the report also documented the needs of Indigenous Australians across all rural and urban communities.

The Federal Government estimates that about 120 000 Aboriginal people live in remote communities. Current estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community would mean that remote communities would make up 24% of the Indigenous population. While it is perhaps easier politically to gather support from the broader Australian community for dealing with problems in Aboriginal communities where the population looks more like 'real' Aborigines, it is irresponsible – and in the end, bad policy – to ignore the other 76% of the Aboriginal community. This leaves out communities in Walgett, Redfern, Framlingham, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney, including Mount Druitt, which, with 17 000 Indigenous people, is the largest Indigenous community in New South Wales.



10. INDIGENOUS URBAN DISADVANTAGE

Analysis

The question often asked in relation to Indigenous issues is why, if so much money is spent on Indigenous issues, there is not a narrowing of the socio-economic disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The Federal Government now spends over \$3 billion per year on 'Indigenous specific projects'.

Lack of spending on basic services and infrastructure and no focus on developing human and social capital - The Australian Medical Association, in a report titled Expenditures on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health estimated that Indigenous health needs were underfunded by \$452.5 million a year. When it is remembered that over \$60 billion is spent on health by governments each year, this underfunding would require less than a 1% increase in that spending. What this indicates is that the overall spending on Indigenous issues should be better targeted and increased to meet Indigenous needs. Such needs should not be measured by comparing the location of needy Aboriginal communities with other Aboriginal communities. Rather we need to see their comparison with non-Aboriginal communities.

Mainstreaming as a policy approach in urban areas

- The policy of diverting resources from urban/rural to rural/remote communities is underpinned by an ideology of mainstreaming and the belief that communities in urban areas in particular should be serviced by mainstream organisations. The danger with this approach is that policies of 'mainstreaming' have failed in the past to address the problems of poorer health, poorer levels of education, higher levels of unemployment and poorer standards of housing that Aboriginal communities have experienced. 'Mainstreaming' also fails to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage, interest in land and language. To date, this approach has not offered a way in which Aboriginal people can play the central role in making decisions that will impact on their families and communities.

The failure of mainstreaming has stemmed from its inability to target specific issues that arise in Aboriginal communities in relation to health, education, housing and employment. All Australians are entitled to high quality services and they cannot be delivered to urban Indigenous communities unless there is a more sophisticated understanding of specific socio-economic needs



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and ways of delivering services that accommodate specific cultural differences. Mainstreaming services have failed in the past because they have not been supported to develop specific mechanisms and strategies for Aboriginal clients.

In addition Aboriginal people claim that they are often subjected to racism within these mainstream services. Those claims of racism, particularly in relation to the delivery of health services, were well documented in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The case of Arthur Moffitt who was arrested on a train for drunkenness, taken to the police lockup and died in custody while actually suffering from a hyperglycaemic episode is a tragic example of the failure of mainstream services. While these issues occur in Indigenous communities around the country, they are often overlooked in urban areas where it is assumed that mainstream services can deal with the needs of all.

Cost-shifting and other structural barriers to policy making - Since the 1967 referendum, the Federal Government has had the specific power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This has meant that one of the key challenges in the Indigenous affairs portfolio is the shared responsibility between Federal and State/Territory Governments on key areas such as health, housing and education. Rather than this shared responsibility being approached in a collaborative way, it tends to be characterised by cost shifting between governments and by poor communication and coordination between government agencies at both levels. Current policy drivers also fail to take into account the following structural barriers to innovative and effective policy making:

- A focus on projects rather than programmes means that policy makers are primarily engaged with the delivery of short-term project funding rather than developmental programmes that invest in people.
- The project mantra is premised on the belief that a desired outcome can be engineered by the implementation of a series of projects focused on addressing the symptoms not the causes of disadvantage.



- The focus on projects fits easily within one or two budgets within the political cycle but means that organisations are unsure as to their future viability and their capacity to address longer-term structural needs.
- Current policies tend to equate accounting with accountability and progress with funds disbursement, a focus on money without a complementary focus on outcomes. Not only is current policy in the Indigenous affairs portfolio being driven by ideology rather than evidence and research, it is currently running in a direction that directly contradicts what research says, especially in relation to two important principles:
- Indigenous people need to be extensively involved in setting priorities, developing policy directions and implementing or overseeing projects and programmes.
- Indigenous communities across the country have diverse needs and cultures and a regional approach is the most effective in responding to these differences.

10. INDIGENOUS URBAN DISADVANTAGE

Three policy ideas

1. There should be less reliance on the provision of services to urban Indigenous communities through mainstream services. Instead planning processes should be established that are based on good demographic and needs analyses of Indigenous people within the region. This planning process should also guide the coordination of responsibility between State and Federal Government agencies so that there is a clearer and agreed sharing of responsibility for systems of good service provision.
2. A regional planning process should assist in the development of an approach to service delivery that meets the needs of Indigenous people in urban regions. This will involve the provision of services by both 'mainstream' services and dedicated Indigenous service organisations. The mainstream service organisations, such as schools and health services, must have the capacity to recognise and respond to the needs of Indigenous Australians. The Indigenous Service organisations must be supported in ways that enable them to plan, provide and evaluate services over a number of years.
3. Policy that responds to Indigenous issues should be guided by a research based policy approach rather than an ideological approach. It should build upon what has been shown to provide good services to Indigenous people by Indigenous organisations and mainstream service providers. The research that is used to inform this type of policy making should include both research focused on service delivery models and the governance of services and service delivery systems. It is important that policy makers charged with responsibility for developing strategies aimed at strengthening Indigenous communities and their institutions use the best available research knowledge about the factors known to create stronger Aboriginal communities.

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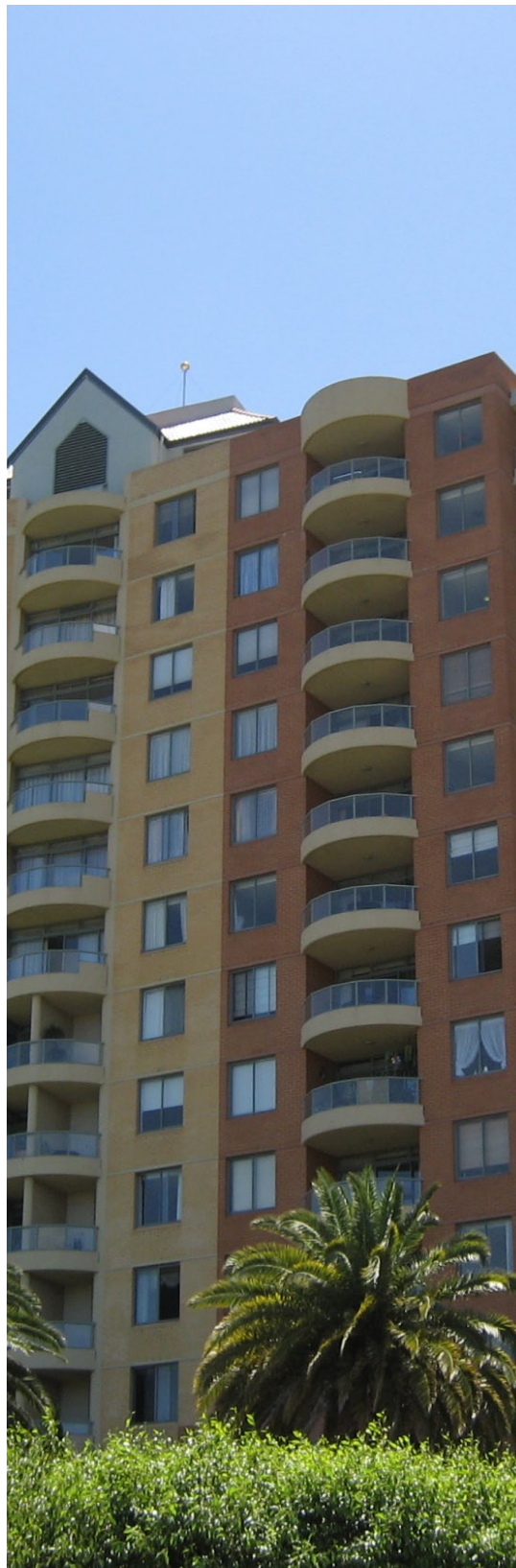
11. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES AND REGENERATION

The problem

There is a serious divide in success and opportunity across Australian communities. Prosperity has delivered record levels of income and wealth growth to many households. Overwhelmingly the most advantaged households are concentrated spatially into districts with distinctive natural features, excellent access and high quality amenity and local services. At the other end of the social spectrum, though, there are spatial communities which have had little of prosperity's spoils, or whose attempts to raise living standards are now threatened by rising interest rates and limited community resources.

Like the rest of the western world, Australia's economic settings and circumstances have changed dramatically over the last three decades. In its postwar years, the Australian economy was operated to secure both economic growth and a shared set of economic benefits across the nation's communities. Trade protection, fiscal and monetary controls and government control over infrastructure and utilities combined to ensure reasonable levels of access to the benefits of economic growth by all Australian communities. Globalisation and new approaches to economic management have changed governments' attitudes to economic intervention especially in terms of securing equitable spatial outcomes.

Increasingly, then, individual households are seen as having the responsibility for ensuring successful access to housing, employment, and health and education resources. Yet, we now have conclusive evidence that Australian communities' experience of prosperity is vastly different. Moreover, it is clear that particular types of communities have very unequal access to employment, income, wealth, and social, cultural and lifestyle resources.



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Analysis

There is a substantial Australian and international literature on the nature and needs of urban communities. The Australian literature is now well advanced and can be readily summarised. Four specific types of spatially disadvantaged communities can be identified.

First, there are the old industrial regions. These include the postwar industrial cities like Newcastle, Wollongong, Geelong and Whyalla and the traditional industrial parts of our cities such as within the central and south-western sub-regions of Sydney, the central-west and northern suburbs of Melbourne, and within the northern suburbs of Adelaide. These areas have the highest concentrations of workers displaced by job loss in Australia's manufacturing industry; and while unemployment rates have improved in these areas over the last decade, higher than average numbers of disability support pension recipients and lower than average employment ratios across all age groups, male and female, in these areas indicate the partial nature of employment spread effects arising from economic good times.

Compounding the problem of old industrial regions has been the migration of welfare dependent families into these regions, chiefly in search of cheap housing. These families typically have poorer education and training levels, and higher incidence of emotional, mental health and social behaviour problems, meaning compounding increases in the demands on social infrastructure and community resources in areas where these are already overstretched.

Second, there are the battling suburbs, typically cheaper housing areas in the older central belts of the capital cities and in concentrations of public housing in the outer suburbs. Alongside concentrations of welfare dependent households, these areas are also the host neighbourhoods for recently arrived migrant groups.

Like the older industrial areas, these suburbs have experienced poorer levels of employment access and lower rates of income growth throughout the prosperity period. Moreover, educational outcomes in these suburbs in terms of achievement and completion rates are poor and there are rising levels of lifestyle-related health problems including asthma, diabetes and obesity. Again, these problems are placing considerable stress on sub-regional educational, health and community infrastructure and resources.

Third, there are the outer suburban commuter belts. Housing affordability problems in our capital cities alongside high urban growth rates, especially in Sydney, Melbourne, south-east Queensland and Perth, have pushed many families to peripheral housing estates in order to secure their dream of home ownership. Relatively easy access to mortgage finance has supported outer urban expansion. The viability of these communities is now under threat. Rising interest rates have produced high levels of housing stress. Falling home prices have eroded housing equity and diminished access to cheap supplementary personal finance through redraw. The number of mortgage defaults is rising.

Moreover, households in the outer commuter belts have disproportionately high transportation costs. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage report on Sustainable Cities found that in the period of repaying a mortgage, say over 25 years, a typical outer urban household spends at least as much of its income on motor vehicle transport as it does on mortgage repayments.

The consequence for a household of a shift to the edge of a city to secure affordable housing, then, is a major hike in personal transport costs. In the absence of effective public transport solutions and in the face of climate change constraints and ongoing petrol price rises into the future, the financial, social and environmental sustainability of the outer commuter belts is seriously threatened.

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Fourth, there are the urban shadows. Shifts in the ways infrastructure is planned, financed and delivered in Australia has meant that the principle of universality in the delivery of urban infrastructure no longer applies. Universality means that a household has access to basic, essential infrastructure irrespective of geographical location. In Australia this has meant access to local and arterial roads, reasonable degree of public transport provision, power, water and sewerage, domestic garbage services and so on.

It has also meant access to quality public education and health services irrespective of capacity to pay, and to a level of cultural community and recreation resources commensurate with community standards for a quality, healthy, active Australian lifestyle.

The dramatic shift in government attitude to the debt financing of infrastructure and, commensurately, the willingness of the private sector to finance, construct and operate infrastructure, has led to an abandonment of the principle of universality in infrastructure provision with the rise of communities which can be described as being in urban shadows. This means that

they suffer diminished access to a city's facilities and opportunities because infrastructure provision in their suburbs is inadequate or because their household income is too low to buy an infrastructure service at a suitable level. Examples of urban shadows caused by physical or financial constraints on access to infrastructure include: lack of access to internet services because of low income; or because a poor suburb is bypassed by an internet service provider; areas with under-resourced and overstretched public education and public health facilities; and areas dependent on toll roads for access to employment and basic amenities.

The infrastructure problem is compounded by financial crisis in the local government sector. This sector now has diminished capacity to maintain existing local infrastructure, such as local roads, bridges, libraries, parks and gardens, and is unable to raise extra resources to cope with the problems generated at the community level by infrastructure underspending by State and Federal Governments, and by other social and economic change.



11. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES AND REGENERATION

Three policy ideas

1. Federal and State Governments need to undertake an audit of infrastructure provision for all Australian communities. Urban communities will feature predominantly in this audit, although it is acknowledged non-metropolitan communities face similar problems. This audit should commence with the development of a charter of infrastructure entitlement: what is the basic set of infrastructure that a community should have access to, and whose responsibility is it to supply and maintain this infrastructure. The audit should then proceed to identify infrastructure backlogs and projected needs, and devise fair and imaginative ways for infrastructure provision with a national funding programme to secure a productive, sustainable future for Australian communities irrespective of geographical locality.
2. Likewise, Federal and State Governments should devise and work actively towards local employment containment targets. The idea here is that employment planning be integrated across urban planning and labour market planning agencies so that urban sub-regions and the old industrial regions be guaranteed a satisfactory level of local jobs provision. The idea of employment containment provides a target, for example, for local planners to set aside suitable employment lands for industrial development and support for office and retail developments in local urban centres. Addressing the issue of employment containment can simultaneously attack the problems of welfare dependency, unsustainable and expensive commuting, traffic congestion on arterial roads, and home-work time imbalances.
3. Federal and State Governments should work cooperatively to rebuild quality, universally accessible public health and education services. A population's good health and its level of education and training are the two major assets for effective participation in an advanced prosperous economy and a civilised, metropolitan society. Guaranteed access to educational and health services of high quality irrespective of household income or place of residence is, and has always been, the most effective policy instrument for producing strong, self-reliant communities. It is surprising how easily, or conveniently, we neglect this most essential of all policy options.

Professor Phillip O'Neill,
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12. THE POSTCODE LOTTERY: NEIGHBOURHOODS OF HOPE AND DESPAIR

The problem

The neighbourhoods of Australian cities are diverse places with different communities that enjoy varying levels of amenity, quality and other bundles of services. These 'packages' of quality are generally reflected in the price we pay for owning or renting a house but recent research evidence highlights that Australian cities are polarising rapidly around wealth and ethnic identity. This is occurring at the scale of the neighbourhood so that these places are rapidly becoming places of concentrated poverty or affluence. This process has been accompanied by an equivalent polarisation in access to services. For poor neighbourhoods, this means a much lower level of access to key services and infrastructure. Yet debate about what kind of service levels and infrastructure is acceptable to sustain communities and generate opportunities for residents has not been forthcoming from State, city and Federal Government discussions.

Where we live says much about who we live beside, and the kind of opportunities and quality of life that we are likely to experience. This suggests two key problems. First, that taxation, welfare spending, housing wealth and economic opportunity are helping to fracture society generally, and cities in particular, into places of concentrated affluence and disadvantage. Second, that the housing market, left to itself, is reinforcing these effects by allocating social groups into particular types of neighbourhood in which social concentration of affluence and deprivation is more common than the generation of social diversity. We argue that concerted action at both these systemic and city levels is now needed if we are to try and avoid increasing social polarisation and the associated disadvantages that such a situation imposes on those on the downside of the booming global city economies.



12. THE POSTCODE LOTTERY: NEIGHBOURHOODS OF HOPE AND DESPAIR

Analysis

It is perhaps easy to agree on the importance of ensuring fairness in opportunity and outcomes for all, but less so to think about how we can ensure these results. How can such concerns be addressed when cities are polarising around wealth and ethnic identity? Concern about segregation has tended to focus on the way in which concentrations of poverty exacerbate social inequality by channelling poorer groups into lower quality neighbourhoods that lack opportunity. There are now reasons to believe that these are growing problems in Australian cities where neighbourhoods are now becoming demonstrably more polarised between sites of poverty or affluence. The costs of these changes lie in a number of domains:

- The impact on health and education that stems from growing up in a poor household and neighbourhood with low environmental, infrastructure and service quality.
- The greater costs and social risks associated with living in areas that are stigmatised socially (e.g., economic prospects reduced) and discriminated against financially (e.g., higher insurance costs). The higher cost of credit and risk exposure also means that these communities are more vulnerable in the event of an economic reverse.
- The displacement of lower cost labour to peripheral urban areas, thus imposing costly work journeys or exclusion from job-rich areas.
- The inaccessibility of essential services, infrastructure and opportunities to the lives of more disadvantaged households.

Australian cities, unlike their US or European equivalents, have not featured ghettoised poverty and extreme segregation. Yet the gap between rich and poor communities is widening. This is highlighted by contrasting the ratio of average taxable income in the bottom and top ten postcodes of our largest cities. In the period 1995 and 2003 this ratio has increased from 2.1 to 2.7 in Melbourne and from 2.3 to 2.9 in Sydney.

Recent research shows that at the small-scale neighbourhood level, the most disadvantaged localities are becoming more concentrated in certain urban areas, mainly in the now aging middle suburbs and postwar public housing estates. It also shows that low income workers who rely on the private rental market have been pushed further into the suburbs as affordable housing disappears from the job-rich inner city areas.

The result of these shifts has been dramatic and includes changes in the look, feel and experience of living in our urban areas. This is further highlighted by growing segregation as those with choices 'escape' the difficulties of living in more deprived and 'service-poor' locations to new developments on the fringe, while gentrifying inner-city populations become ever more disassociated from the suburbs.

The consequence is an urban social patchwork in which we see a concentration of high and low income households that are retreating into affluent enclaves and poorer ghettos. Lower income groups are more constrained in their choices and are more likely to be reliant on poor quality private rental or public/community housing that is often concentrated in particular neighbourhoods.



12. THE POSTCODE LOTTERY: NEIGHBOURHOODS OF HOPE AND DESPAIR

There is social stigmatisation and limited prospects for residents. Councils in these areas do not have the rates base to support high level services and infrastructure provision, which can contribute to a self-perpetuating cycle of decline.

For the affluent the converse of these problems is the case. Concentrations of high income residents in enclaves leads to lower management costs for local authorities, the clustering of higher quality basic private services, such as childcare and shopping facilities, and the general locational advantage of being closer to transport networks and labour market opportunities.

There is then an urgent need to promote outcomes of social fairness in the way that we plan our cities, to ensure that people are not disadvantaged simply by virtue of where they live – what we can call a postcode lottery. A key issue here is that the concentration of disadvantage not only reflects the inability of our society to reduce inequalities and broadly boost opportunities for all households, but also that the loss of social diversity and services within neighbourhoods has compounding effects on households that makes the emergence of social exclusion even more likely. This is because research shows that where we live and the quality of our housing profoundly affects our quality of life.

Our neighbourhood delivers access to a range of related fields and benefits such as particular types of services like shopping, points of sociability and interaction, places for children to play and a range of amenities that affect our opportunities to participate and function. Being poor in a disadvantaged neighbourhood not only means that we have few resources within our household; it also means that our access to health services, education, shopping, places for play and social development, as well as economic opportunities, may be hindered.

Growing polarisation and neighbourhood inequality will also have potentially adverse impacts on the economic efficiency of our cities. This includes long commutes for low to moderate income residents accessing inner city service jobs and possible difficulties for employers filling low-wage service jobs in the inner cities.

Furthermore, crime and other 'social problems' associated with concentrations of poverty impose costs on the community that divert resources away from public services such as education and health with negative impacts for productivity.



12. THE POSTCODE LOTTERY: NEIGHBOURHOODS OF HOPE AND DESPAIR

Three policy ideas

1. We need to see a wide-ranging Commonwealth Government review of the policy levers that can be put in place to prevent existing fiscal, welfare and economic policies entrenching spatial disadvantage in cities. In other words, we need to understand why the increasing economic opportunities our cities have experienced in recent decades have not been distributed more evenly across urban populations. Explicit goals for reducing social exclusion, equality of opportunity in educational and economic terms and the reduction of gross financial and social inequalities need to be at the forefront of an effective Federal Government challenge to these unacceptable inequities. Central governments such as the US and the UK have powerful ministries charged with strategic responsibility for urban policy. There is currently an absence of Federal Government involvement in this important policy area in Australia.
2. Significant Federal investment in the expansion of the community housing sector is urgently needed to provide high quality accommodation and footholds in hot property market areas to maintain social diversity and reduce social stigma associated with public housing. By extension, areas of concentrated public housing would benefit from higher quality service infrastructure that could be allocated through incentives to small entrepreneurs to set up shops and other services.

3. Neighbourhood planning to prevent spatial disadvantage. In order to pursue the broader goal of social diversity in neighbourhoods, and reduction of state, social and economic costs imposed by concentrated socio-spatial polarisation, two things need to underpin the preceding proposals. First, it is important that local planning systems contain the presumption that new residential development should contain both a range of core services to prevent unnecessary travel and reliance on travel networks as well as a range of dwelling types including affordable housing. This kind of planning at the neighbourhood level addresses concerns about environmental as well as social sustainability while helping to avoid private sector development that contains the risk of future obsolescence. A range of local land uses help to ensure that neighbourhoods remain socially vital and intrinsically interesting places to be and also to ensure that economic flows go into, as well as from, neighbourhoods.

Second, a focus on the neighbourhood as a primary focus for the integrated delivery of a range of services including education, early learning, community health services and preventative programmes, community policing and quality affordable housing needs to be developed as part of a wholesale realignment of Federal, State and local interventions to address the increasing socio-economic imbalances of our major urban areas.

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13. SUSTAINABLE LEARNING CITIES

The problem

For the first time in human history, more than half of the world's population lives in cities rather than the countryside.

This is a momentous shift, but has been part of the Australian experience since early European settlement. Despite this, we have not yet learnt to live sustainably in our cities. Despite unprecedented levels of national productivity, profits and taxation, insufficient emphasis has been given to the physical and social infrastructure needed to live sustainably in our cities. At all scales, from the personal to the community, to the governmental, we need to establish processes through which we can learn our way to sustainability: not to learn about or even for sustainability, but developing sustainability policy and practice as a process of learning. The goal of the sustainable city is not an end in itself but a process of measured change. Our ability to shape this change in sustainable directions depends on our ability to learn: from our past successes and mistakes, from our neighbourhoods and communities, and from networks of cities around Australia and around the world. Learning as an individual, as a community, and as a city are key dimensions of the 'sustainable learning city'.



13. SUSTAINABLE LEARNING CITIES

Analysis

Individual learning for sustainability - The Harvard ecologist E. O. Wilson argues that 'the shift to sustainable development will depend as much on education and social change as on science'. Wilson was not necessarily referring to the sort of learning delivered in schools or universities. Rather, his concern was with the type of learning that can help shift the mental models of humankind in relation to ecosystems, societies and economics away from ones that foster unsustainable living and working practices. Mental models are the representation of the world held by individuals as a result of their socialisation and long-held beliefs, and which determine personally meaningful lifestyle choices. As such, mental models societies – and the collective cultural models, which inform them – provide the underlying structure for social, economic and environmental beliefs and are a critical underpinning for individual and collective behaviour.

The mental and cultural models of Australians are, of course, quite diverse, reflecting our many histories, geographies and personal and cultural aspirations. However, when aggregated through surveys and other research, they display a number of common elements. For example, research for the World Education Fellowship identified the three key aspirations of Australians: to be a just and caring society, to appreciate the needs of others and, to create a healthy environment. Surveys by the Australian Bureau of Statistics confirm this while, in NSW, where community surveys of environmental knowledge, attitudes and behaviour have been conducted every three years since 1994, 85 to 88% of people state that they are (very or somewhat) concerned about environmental problems. In the most recent survey, 92% said the environment is the third highest priority after family and friends.

Yet, there are contradictions in our mental models for, despite such beliefs, the Australian Ecological Footprint, already the second highest in the world, is growing – as are incomes, consumption and consumer debt, income disparities and wealth inequalities, the number of homeless, and overall dissatisfaction with our standard of living. The anomalies in these various trends may be seen in the actions of Australians of all ages. Research for

the National Youth Advisory Research Scheme found that young Australians are quite ambivalent in their environmental attitudes. They say it is important but while 92% agree that shopping behaviours impact negatively on social and environmental systems, only 40% consider the impacts of their shopping behaviour sometimes, with 12% admitting to never having such thoughts. This ambivalence is seen amongst adult Australians in relation to urban trends. For example:

Demand for larger houses - Despite falling household sizes, the average size of a new house is almost double what it was in 1950, with space per occupant of a new house more than doubling since the 1970s.

Increased consumption of energy: Electricity consumption has more than doubled since 1980, with demand per capita increasing fivefold between 1950 and 2000 in Sydney, largely driven by increased use of air conditioning.

Rising car ownership: There were 686 motor vehicles per 1000 people in Australia in 2005, compared to 645 vehicles per 1000 residents in 2001, a 4.1% increase.

Increasing wasteful consumption: A 2004 Australia-wide study found that Australians spend in excess of \$1.7 billion dollars annually on fashion garments they do not wear while \$5.9 billion worth of purchased food is not eaten and dumped every year.

These studies point to the need for all Australians, especially those living in cities, to learn the significance and implications of their lifestyle choices and about ways of making changes. The long years of the recent drought have forced such learning for water conservation. However, there is a need for a proactive approach to learning how to live more sustainably in all aspects of urban life without the incentive of impending calamity.

While governments cite the need to raise awareness about sustainability issues and support projects to promote this, their efforts tend to be misdirected. People already are aware but lack the knowledge and sense of personal efficacy for taking action. Therefore, education to help them develop the critical capacities necessary to act on their awareness is a vital policy imperative, especially when education programmes could be accompanied by a range of cross-sectoral policies and legislation

13. SUSTAINABLE LEARNING CITIES

that provide a supportive context for people to act on the lessons such programmes teach.

Learning communities in cities - The development of learning communities of place – at urban and regional levels – is a response by individuals in communities who wish to sustain cherished values, beliefs, behaviour and environment that make their places special, if not unique.

There has been a steady growth of learning community initiatives around the world since a 1992 OECD conference launched the concept in Gothenberg, Sweden. Learning Cities, learning towns, learning regions, learning communities are terms now in common use throughout the developed and developing world as local and regional administrators recognise that a more prosperous future depends on the development of the human and social capital in their midst. The focus on lifelong learning in learning communities enables local people across various sectors to collectively enhance the social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions of their community.

It is a pragmatic, asset-based approach that mobilises learning resources and expertise across business, government, education, voluntary and the public sectors, and allows major issues such as sustainable living in cities, social exclusion, educational participation and so forth to be better tackled through explicit recognition, valuing and investing in individual and social learning in learning cities.

The first city council in Australia to declare itself a learning city was Albury-Wodonga in 1998. Since then, more than 30 councils across Australia have followed suit and formed the Australian Learning Communities Network.

Hume City is a prime example of these changes. Hume is home to more than 150 000 people and spans a vast rural and metropolitan area. It is a young, culturally diverse community with low levels of literacy, school completion, employment and community engagement. Hume City Council has a Social Justice Charter that underpins its vision for Hume as a Learning Community. As part of this commitment, Council established two learning centres – the Hume Global

Learning Centre in Broadmeadows and the Visy Cares Learning Centre in Meadow Heights. In addition, Hume City Council in 2003 initiated the establishment of the Hume Global Learning Village (HGLV) which is a network of people and organisations in Hume who are collectively taking action to promote learning opportunities and improve learning outcomes in Hume.

Members of the Village include Hume Council, Victoria University, RMIT, Kangan Batman TAFE, numerous schools, neighbourhood renewal, teachers, neighbourhood houses, private education providers, non-profit organisations with an interest in education – everyone who has an interest in making Hume a learning community. Recently, members of the HGLV collectively developed the Learning Together 2 Strategy Plan, which builds on previous work and serves as a blueprint for the development of Hume as a Learning Community over the next five years. The Village has adopted a traditional African proverb 'It takes a Village to raise a Child' to reflect the view that learning is not the sole responsibility of a child or of the individual but is a whole-of-community responsibility. This is so whether working on issues such as school retention rates, environment, social housing or the redevelopment of the secondary schooling system.

A key aspect of a sustainable learning city is the development of a sense of place and sustainability ethics as central city objectives – not just because these can help conserve the natural environment or make people feel better living in a known and loved locale, but because they are also central to the long-term economic vitality of a community and to the quality of life that its members enjoy. Indeed, making learning for integrated social, economic and environmental sustainability the focus of all sustainable city programmes is the only way of ensuring their success.

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To this end, an integrated approach to sustainable learning communities will need to be based upon processes for ensuring: a healthy environment; a city in equilibrium and with it a natural milieu education as a basis for economic progress and wealth generation; tolerance, and inclusiveness, high levels of citizen participation in decision making and planning a culture that looks beyond adaptation; a focus on cooperative partnerships and social interaction as a means of bringing people together to facilitate social action and change a pragmatic, and; an asset-based approach to mobilize the learning resources and expertise across business, government, education, voluntary and the public sector.

Three policy ideas

1. The implementation of the National Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development of the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Water Resources should direct support to learning for sustainability in cities with resources provided to local governments to establish learning-based approaches to urban and regional sustainability.
2. All levels of government need to link strategies for sustainable development to already well-established learning-community or community-development initiatives that mobilise local people across various sectors to act together to enhance the social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions of their community.
3. The Commonwealth Government should establish a cities portfolio and establish learning-based networking processes across Australian towns and cities and link to international networking forums.

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14. URBAN VITALITY, CULTURE AND THE PUBLIC REALM

The problem

The urban public realm is critical to creating and maintaining vital and inclusive cities. There has been a welcome acknowledgement of the importance of the urban public realm in Australian urban policy, with increasing amounts of energy and resources devoted to its improvement. However, while there is apparent agreement on the significance of public space there is less clarity over what constitutes 'good' public space and the degree to which it can be deliberately created. Beyond this, urban public spaces and institutions are being transformed by urban redevelopment trends, culture-based and creative city planning strategies, shifts in management and ownership arrangements, and by the impact of concerns regarding public safety and security. This is a timely moment at which to evaluate contemporary challenges to the urban public realm and to focus on coherent policy recognition and response.

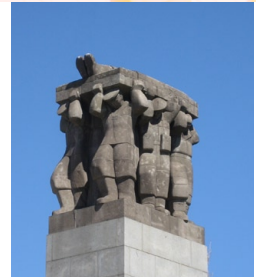
Analysis

Urban culture can be thought of as the lifestyle and values associated with city living. These values are expressed through social interaction in urban public spaces, such as streets, public squares and shopping areas. These interactions, often based around the daily flow of the workday, combine with chance encounters and special events. This daily social life of the city drives its vitality and vibrancy in important ways. Globalisation has deepened the social diversity of urban populations and lifestyles (see the 45 entry on multiculturalism). Urban cultures are therefore shaped by difference around social class, ethnicity, culture, lifestyle and value systems. Cities are made up of different 'publics' who come together through social interaction in the public spaces of a city.

Urban culture also refers to the cultural and creative activities harboured in and around museums, galleries, libraries and public performance spaces. The depth and richness of urban cultural activities have long been mainstays of urban vitality but in recent years they have also been assigned a central role as drivers of urban regeneration and economic development: as being at the core of 'creative' and competitive cities.



14. URBAN VITALITY, CULTURE AND THE PUBLIC REALM



The importance of cultural production and creative industries to urban economic prosperity and liveability has led to a proliferation of cultural and creative city strategies across Australian cities and to culturally-led urban redevelopment projects, for example Melbourne's Federation Square, Brisbane's South Bank and Darwin's waterfront. However, problems have been associated with these developments:

- (a) The prioritisation of large-scale redeveloped precincts centred on formal public spaces can result in over-planning and over-regulation. Vital cities are as much disordered as they are ordered. Over-formalised public spaces may not best catalyse the everyday, often banal, interactions that underpin a truly creative and vibrant city.
- (b) The reproduction of ideas about what public spaces should look like has often led to the development of homogeneous places, with a loss of distinctiveness.
- (c) A concentration on the inner city has come at the expense of suburban areas. The focus of strategies promoting urban culture has not been distributed in ways that have maximised the social value of these approaches. Nor have these strategies adequately reflected the changing nature of the urban creative economy which is growing in a spatially uneven fashion, being more suburban than previously thought, nor the need to nurture local community-based culture.

- (d) The displacement of low income residents and small-scale cultural producers has been driven by the impact of urban redevelopment on rent inflation and loss of a genuinely diverse and vibrant urban public realm.

There has been a growth in the development and management of public spaces by private agencies and corporations. The consequent commercialisation of public space has tended to constrain the openness of the public realm. A key problem has been the way that security is often aligned with seeing public spaces as places of consumption, often to the exclusion of activities and groups that do not fit with existing pictures of the 'creative city'. Sometimes particular social groups (both young and old) are identified as unproductive, anti-social or otherwise threatening to the function of some public spaces which are managed through excessive surveillance and regulation.

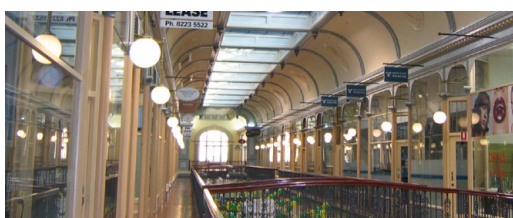
Urban culture and vitality fundamentally shape and depend on an open and diverse urban public realm containing the spaces and institutions around which people can come together to engage with one another, participating in events or engaging in common projects. These are the collective spaces in which various publics encounter and engage with one another and they are the spaces where creative and cultural activities are enacted: streetscapes, community centres and clubs, parks, playgrounds and sporting areas, public performance spaces, festivals and community celebrations, formal civic spaces and institutions.



14. URBAN VITALITY, CULTURE AND THE PUBLIC REALM

However, there is some evidence of a tendency in Australian cities, particularly among the affluent, to withdraw from these everyday public spaces and into residential and leisure spaces that are characterised by high levels of social control and social homogeneity. The trend towards planned community title developments regulated by environmental and behavioural covenants is one market response to this tendency. This may be a response to intensified urban security fears and it may be an indication, as research has suggested, that some city residents are overwhelmed by intense urban diversity and react with avoidance. The impact of this growing social privatism also threatens the role of cities as places nurturing social contact across this diversity.

Both the commercialisation of public space and these urban fears and discomforts are problematic because of the limitations they place on social cohesion. Limiting our encounters with social diversity is likely to produce more rather than less fear, as residents retreat into private residential areas that they contrast with dangerous public spaces. So the role of welcoming, high quality and well-managed urban public spaces in engendering senses of belonging and community cannot be underestimated.



Three policy ideas

1. The commitment of State and Federal Governments is needed for sustained investment in the small-scale social and physical infrastructure that supports a vibrant public realm that is accessible across urban and suburban populations. A commitment to invest in the development of urban public spaces must extend beyond formal civic spaces to include the encouragement of informal and unstructured public spaces. These include local parks and playgrounds, plazas and urban design elements to encourage urban encounter and conversation (e.g., shaded seating areas on main streets). Places like community centres, clubs and cultural spaces, recreation spaces catering to a diversity of age groups, levels of mobility and ethnicity are also essential to this mixed-use of public space.

Currently such spaces are largely funded by local government authorities including via developer contributions schemes (S94 contributions in NSW). State budgets on the other hand more commonly support larger scaled, 'monumental' high-profile development projects. Fiscal and political pressures on local government make them unable to cater fully for broader city vitality. Local planning instruments must ensure consideration is given to availability and accessibility of such spaces in the assessment of new residential and mixed-use developments, both in inner urban



14. URBAN VITALITY, CULTURE AND THE PUBLIC REALM

and in suburban settings. We need to prioritise the production of spaces that facilitate diverse everyday encounters that generate cohesion and strength from urban social diversity.

2. The development of funded local authority public space management strategies that:

attract diverse users and resist domination of public spaces by a single identity group: places attracting families, older people, women, youth, groups and individuals;

avoid marginalising specific user groups and/or the non-consuming public, and;

nurture uses and events that encourage people into public spaces for non-commercial purposes.

These strategies need to include attention to the provision of everyday micro-infrastructures that provide pragmatic encouragements to diverse public space use: bike racks, lockers, public barbecues in parks, wheelchair accessible streetscapes, public notice poster-boards, and good lighting on main streets to support night-time mingling. The establishment of Federal or State community development funds is recommended as a means of supporting and financing these management strategies.

3. Policies are required that counter the gentrification of city housing and the current squeeze on informal and creative uses of central city spaces. Inclusive city planning should support vernacular cultural production, foster creative 'scenes' in the arts, music, design and other fringe activities that have enough critical mass to nurture talent and provide supportive audiences. At the same time, creative city planning needs to counter gentrification/rent rise cycles that drive housing, studio space or living costs beyond the reach of grassroots creative producers. For this reason a wide range of urban policy interventions are necessary:

Creativity-specific strategies: provision of low-cost studio spaces, for example, Marrickville Council's Addison Rd community arts complex for visual artists, theatre companies, musicians, support of neighbourhood cultures via popular culture programmes supported throughout the suburbs, using

neighbourhood community facilities and existing arts and youth organisations such as visual art and music strategies in Western Sydney. Integration of existing public institutions with vernacular creative scenes, for example community arts programmes with galleries; live music venues at universities special events designed to showcase local creativity using public space to enable free, equitable access for audiences and to maximise exposure for local artists, for example Sydney's Sculpture by the Sea.

Wider urban, State and Federal policies supporting inclusive creativity: provision of low-rent social housing for artists, such as Seattle's Artspace projects which have pooled philanthropic donations, city and state money and in-kind support to provide low cost, rent-controlled housing for registered arts workers wage support for arts and creative workers and incorporation of creative activities as legitimate 'work' in unemployment benefits/income support schemes revision of licensing and noise pollution laws in specific precincts and public spaces to enable better use of existing areas as festival and live music spaces and facilitate special events, after-hours family/child-care provision acknowledging that many creative workers work most at night.

Clearly this range of policies requires a mix of local, State and Federal initiatives. Devising an appropriate framework to carry them will clearly demand a whole-of-government approach.

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15. CRIME AND THE CITY

The problem

Unemployment, poverty and declining opportunities directly affect the physical and psychological well-being of people. This is significant insofar as such social problems are entrenched at a spatial level; they are being increasingly concentrated in specific locations around the country, including particular urban sites. The social costs of marginality are inevitably translated into the economic costs of crime. But the social costs of marginality are also transformed into behaviour that is often defined as 'anti-social' and 'dangerous'. All of this is bound to have an impact on the self-image of marginalised young people and their efforts at self-defence in a hostile environment. The pooling of social resources and the construction

of identities that are valued by others (if only one's peers) finds expression in a range of cultural forms, including various youth subcultures and 'gang' formations. Meanwhile, the crimes of the powerful continue to escape both media scrutiny and coercive law enforcement. City crime is equated with those on the streets, not those in the suites. Homicide is decried in newspaper headlines, yet preventable workplace death takes more lives each year than the deaths revealed in the criminal justice statistics. Tales and experiences of burglary and robbery make us shake with fear, yet the more extreme cases of business fraud rarely cause a quiver. It is the poor who constitute the 'perishing classes'; the ethnic poor the 'dangerous classes' of early twenty-first century.



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Analysis

The visible face of crime in cities is that of street crime, and that of the ethnic minority. It is people in positions of disadvantage, and people who have been politically and socially marginalised who are the key targets for media vilification and state intervention. The public branding of crime in New South Wales as essentially a problem of 'ethnic crime', of crime associated with people of 'Middle Eastern Appearance', is the most infamous (and inaccurate) portrayal of crime in contemporary Australian cities. Nevertheless, similar racialised images are apparent in other cities. What is to be done about crime cannot be divorced from the kinds of values and society we wish to have and promote, as well as questions of 'what works' in specific situations. Community safety and crime prevention strategies are preferable to strict law enforcement approaches insofar as they open the door to more socially inclusive ways of dealing with the crime problem.

Crime prevention, not coercion - In specific circumstances, it may be necessary to institute coercive measures to deal with groups or situations that have got out of hand. For example, specific city sites (hot spots) and specific youth group formations (identifiable gangs) may be targeted for aggressive street policing. Zero tolerance approaches such as these have been criticised, however, for unduly restricting the rights of people, being linked to racist assessments of who gets targeted for intervention, for creating resentment amongst young people toward authority figures, and for sending the wrong message about how best to resolve social conflicts. Coercive 'street cleaning' breeds resentment and exacerbates street violence.

Since there are strong connections between community circumstances that give rise to street crime and street formations such as gangs (e.g., economic marginalisation), and the community relations that sustain them (e.g., ethnic identification), community processes are also most likely to provide the best opportunities for their transformation. Community based approaches have a number of dimensions that include both direct service provision and efforts to build pro-social relationships at the local level. Some are directed at youth specifically; others are designed as whole-of-community strategies that benefit people across the local area in a variety of ways.





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With regard to services, whether intended to be youth-specific or for the community as a whole, it is important to cater to particular social differences within communities. For example, specific spaces and facilities should be reserved, perhaps at designated times, exclusively for certain young people (e.g., swimming pools, rooms that could be used for prayers), in order that religious and cultural practices be acknowledged and respected in a dignified and inclusive manner.

Community-based approaches also include those that involve large-scale, and often non-youth specific, measures. Urban renewal projects and community empowerment programmes, for example, are meant to increase work opportunities for, and civic participation among, local residents. Low neighbourhood attachment, economic deprivation and adversity, and low community organisation are implicated in the constitution of crime-prone areas, so solutions need to address these issues.

From risk to renovation - Many crime prevention approaches are premised upon individualised notions of 'risk', and of devising interventions that target people who are deemed to be 'at risk'. Contrary to this, more effective and long-lasting strategies are oriented toward communities, and the task of community building.

Community reputation, especially if accompanied by stigmas associated with gangs, crime and anti-social activities, has a dramatic impact on life within particular locales. Young people who live in stigmatised areas are more likely than others to suffer consequences in the form of reduced job opportunities and difficulties in moving out. On the other hand there is community building which refers to the provision of various ways in which people can participate in decisions relating to particular city sites – decisions over use, decisions over regulation, and decisions over design and planning.

15. CRIME AND THE CITY

Three policy ideas

1. **Community crime prevention** is about getting people involved, voluntarily and enthusiastically, in doing things that they want to do. An example of a youth-oriented strategy is the employment of detached youth and community workers to provide supervised recreation and leisure activities and after-school programmes. These workers go to where the young people are at, and they intervene in a low-key supportive fashion that is founded upon trust and mutual respect. Youth and community detached work is most strategically effective when merged with wider community development types of interventions and citizen participation.
2. **The development of pride in one's place** can be important in changing negative attitudes and anti-social behaviours into more positive, pro-social directions. This requires conscious efforts to positively portray local areas and suburbs; for community and state agencies to work together to enhance opportunities through the use of strategic initiatives that involve citizens (such as creation of local sports teams); building pride and aspirations by emphasising each person's strengths, capabilities and skills and allowing them to take responsibility to make their neighbourhood something to be proud of; and concerted efforts at physical renewal through projects such as tree planting, mural painting, landscaping of parks and shopping complexes, and painting of homes by tenants, and by initiatives such as establishment of a local garden club.
3. **Diffusing potential tensions on the street among people from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds**, demands that issues such as racism, racial vilification and hate crime be dealt with at the community level. Reconciliation projects, anti-racist training and cross-cultural education can be exercised through public forums, state-provided facilities, standards setting for public officials, and celebratory events. The adoption of appropriate community policing practices, and establishment of protocols for positive and constructive interaction, especially between ethnic minority youth and police/security guards, is essential in restoring social peace and dampening negative relations on the street.

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NEW IDEAS FOR AUSTRALIA'S CITIES

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